RED CLOUD'S WAR: A FAILURE TO EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE THE INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

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GRANT A. BROWN, MAJOR, BRITISH ARMY

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The instruments of national power, as defined within the DIME model, are Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic. This thesis examines the United States' use of its instruments of power with regards to Red Cloud's War of 1866-1868. It addresses the period following the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie and analyzes the war years in particular. It aims to understand both how and why the US failed to effectively coordinate its national instruments against an alliance of Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho bands, leading to an operational defeat for the United States.

The first chapter provides an introduction and general overview of the thesis, establishing a broad chronology. The second and third chapters detail the period from 1851 through to the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. The fourth chapter concludes the thesis, with a bibliographical essay forming the fifth and final chapter.

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major Grant A. Brown

Thesis Title: Red Cloud's War: A Failure to Effectively Coordinate the Instruments of National Power

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
LTC Brian D. Allen, M.A.

_____, Member
Richard S. Faulkner, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Tony R. Mullis, Ph.D.

Accepted this 10th day of June 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

RED CLOUD'S WAR: A FAILURE TO EFFECTIVELY COORDINATE THE INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER, by Major Grant A. Brown, 107 pages.

The instruments of national power, as defined within the DIME model, are Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic. This thesis examines the United States' use of its instruments of national power with regards to Red Cloud's War of 1866-1868. It addresses the period following the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie and analyzes the war years in particular. It aims to understand both how and why the US failed to effectively coordinate its national instruments against an alliance of Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho bands, leading to an operational defeat for the United States.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In its campaign against the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho during Red Cloud's War of 1866-1868, the United States failed to effectively coordinate its instruments of national power which resulted in operational failure and a treaty on the Indians' terms. It agreed to the closure of the Bozeman Trail and abandoned the forts built to protect it. Despite this failure, the US did not experience strategic defeat, as is popularly characterized. It did however fail to achieve its original operational end state in a campaign that was with hindsight, a part of the larger Plains Indian Wars. The United States' acquiescence to the Indians' demands was in reality an operational pause, where space was traded for time. This pause was necessary given the resources allocated to the campaign and the political climate in the United States in 1868, and was facilitated by the progress of the transcontinental railroad. The railroad decreased the importance of the trail as a route to the goldfields of Montana, and the West in general.

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the concept and subject matter, gives an overview of the period leading up to Red Cloud's War, and provides a synopsis of the war itself. The second chapter covers in detail the period from the signing of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie until the end of the American Civil War in 1865. The third chapter details the period following the end of the Civil War, through the war itself, to the ratification of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie by the US Senate in February 1869. The fourth chapter provides a conclusion and any analysis not covered within the preceding chapters. Finally, the fifth chapter is a bibliographical essay. It

discusses the sources used and highlights themes and issues that became apparent when researching this subject.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it describes the instruments of national power as outlined in the DIME model, and justifies their use for this thesis. Second, it introduces the subject matter and provides a general overview of the origins and conduct of Red Cloud's War, establishing both broad context and chronology.

DIME–The Instruments of Power

"The instruments of national power are the means, or resources, which a nation, through its government, possesses to operationalize its power."[1]

There are a number of methods for categorizing the instruments of national power that a state or government has at its disposal for the formulation, influence, and execution of its strategic goals. Current joint US doctrine describes the ability of the United States to advance its national interests as dependent on the government's effectiveness in employing the instruments of national power, which it outlines as Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME).[2]

The reader might question the value of using current doctrine, especially national strategic doctrine, to analyze a historical US campaign against a coalition of American Indians. The counter argument is that although the doctrine is current, the concept of using diplomacy, information, military action, and economic measures to influence and coerce both state and non-state actors is not new. Thucydides wrote about diplomacy, economics, and military operations in detail during his description of the Peloponnesian War over two thousand years ago.[3] The Zulus under King Shaka practiced diplomacy, conducted military action, and deterred their enemies around the turn of the 18th

century,[4] and the American Civil War contains many examples of the destruction of the South's economic base by the North.[5]

It is worth noting that until the end of Red Cloud's War, the United States conducted diplomatic activity with Indian tribes as sovereign nations through a formal treaty process. Therefore one can argue that DIME, as the model for achieving strategic end states with both state and non-state actors, is well suited. Ultimately, the use of DIME in this work is to facilitate a different approach to the framing of this particular campaign.

What follows is a brief description of the instruments of national power within the DIME model, both in terms of US doctrine, and in the context of this thesis. This work is primarily a historical thesis. Therefore, the doctrinal descriptions that follow serve to set context only. While references to the instruments will be present throughout, doctrinal terminology will not.

In the United States Joint Publication (JP) 1 *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States,* diplomacy is defined as "the principal for engaging with other states and foreign groups to advance US values, interests, and objectives." Furthermore, it goes on to explain that "the credible threat of force reinforces, and in some cases, enables the diplomatic process."[6] For the purposes of this study, politics will be included within the diplomatic instrument of power, as the two are interdependent. This thesis will demonstrate that the United States vacillated between diplomacy and military action as a primary response to Indian resistance in the Powder River country during the latter half of the 1860s, and will attempt to understand the reasons why it did so.

When describing the Informational instrument, JP 1 states that "every DOD action that is planned or executed, word that is written or spoken, and image that is displayed or relayed, communicates the intent of DOD, and by extension the USG, with the resulting potential for strategic effects."[7] Just as it does today, information influenced political and public opinion, and in many cases drove the government to adopt policies perceived as peaceful, despite not achieving the strategic end states envisioned. Additionally, US actions as perceived by the Indians were instrumental in influencing the Indian counter-actions.

The military is probably the best understood instrument of power, especially with regards to the Plains Indian Wars. JP 1 defines the US military's purpose as being able to "fight and win the Nation's wars," and states that "Fundamentally, the military instrument is coercive in nature."[8] The US Army, in the context of Red Cloud's War, did much more than coerce the Indians. At times it was forced to formulate policy when no clear direction existed; at others it was called on to create the time and space for diplomatic overtures to occur. On occasions the US Government used the army as a primary response to Indian resistance and hostility. At other times, the army was prevented from conducting aggressive action for a variety of political, diplomatic, and informational reasons.

Finally, JP 1 describes a "strong US economy with free access to global markets and resources" being an enabler of national defense.[9] Again, this instrument should be interpreted in light of the historical time period being studied. The main catalyst for the war, the Bozeman Trail, running as it did through Indian Territory to the gold fields of Montana, was primarily of economic interest to the United States. Another US economic

priority, the transcontinental railroad, ultimately brought about its obsolescence. In the context of this thesis, this instrument of power consists of both the economics driving the conflict, as well as the economic measures, both direct and indirect, utilized in conjunction with the treaty system to induce the Indians to choose peace.

Overview

The history of North America since the arrival of Europeans contains numerous examples of the way in which the instruments of national power were utilized against the indigenous population to weaken, defeat, dispossess, and eventually confine them. Both diplomacy and military action against Indians featured prominently during the French and Indian Wars, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the American Civil War. Land was bought, treaties were signed, and tribes were influenced and arrayed against one another. In some cases, such as that of the Cherokee during the American Civil War, tribes were themselves split as a result of white conflict. In the history of the United States' dealings with American Indians, through all of its instruments of power, the US proved to be the victor, or at least the primary benefactor, in the vast majority of cases. In Red Cloud's War[10] however, there exists an almost unique example of an operational victory for the Indians over the United States, resulting in a treaty on the Indians' terms.

In analyzing the war, this thesis does not seek to cast moral judgement on the actions of the US Government or the US Army. Nor is its aim to lament the historical treatment of Native Americans. It simply aims to identify the reasons underpinning the actions that the US took, and will investigate whether these actions were part of a

considered approach combining the instruments of power, or as a result of inter-departmental conflict within the US Government.

In any historical account, it is difficult to set distinct dates as boundaries. Cause and effect can be separated by days, years, decades, or more. For the purposes of this thesis the starting point used to set context is the seminal 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. It marks the start of diplomatic relations between the US and many of the Indians who would go on to fight alongside Red Cloud 15 years later. It is also symbolic in that the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie formally ended Red Cloud's War, although it would not solve the underlying problems that would once more erupt into open warfare in the decade that followed.

The Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851 drew many thousands of Plains Indians together, including diverse and sometimes adversarial tribes such as the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Mandan, and Arikara. They camped near Fort Laramie, in Wyoming Territory, for 18 days, setting aside their tribal enmities for a time to take part in the negotiations and pageantry. The treaty committed the Indians to a cessation of inter-tribal warfare, and gave the US the right to build roads and military posts within Indian territories. The US also agreed to protect the Indians from white aggression and compensate each tribe for a period of 50 years.[11]

The Anglo-American concept of land ownership and tribal exclusivity was a foreign concept to the Plains Indians; the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho often fought other tribal groups as part of a loose alliance in order to control and benefit from same territory. This largely rendered the boundaries outlined in the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie as culturally meaningless. That is not to suggest that the Indians did not identify

some rights of possession regarding certain hunting grounds; by 1851 the Sioux had steadily pushed the Crow people off lands that they had previously occupied and claimed it as their own through right of conquest.

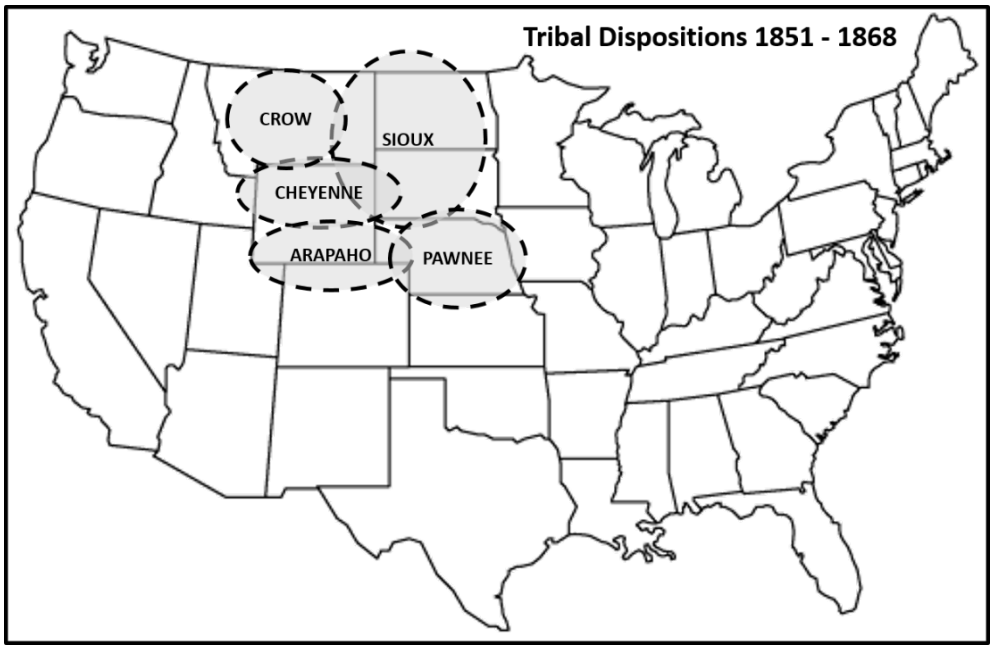

Figure 1. Tribal Locations 1851-1868

Source: Created by author.

Before ratifying the treaty, the Senate altered the terms, reducing the period of promised annuities from 50 to 10 years.[12] The preamble to the treaty stated that the Indians had been informed and had consented to the amendment, although that assertion is still disputed.[13] One of the many issues surrounding treaties was the Eurocentric opinion regarding the power of Indian representatives, or "chiefs", to speak for all individuals within the tribe. It is arguable that US negotiators well understood the cultural inability of a chief to sign for a whole band or tribe, but purposefully ignored this in a

spirit of expediency or, more cynically, as a pretext for military action at a later stage once the terms were inevitably broken. For their part, the Indians largely ignored the treaty and almost immediately returned to inter-tribal warfare and a nomadic way of life.

The first few years after the parties signed the treaty were relatively peaceful. The killing of a Brulé chief over compensation for a Mormon-owned cow shattered that peace in 1854. Various Sioux bands retaliated and destroyed Lieutenant John Grattan's command along the banks of the North Platte River near Fort Laramie, marking the beginning of the Plains Indian Wars. Intermittent violence continued for years between the Army, militias, pioneers, and Indians until the start of the American Civil War.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 signaled a period of reduced regular army activity on the plains, but the arrival of volunteer troops whose discipline and motives for serving were questionable, led to further conflicts and some atrocities, such as the massacre of Cheyenne at Sand Creek in 1864. The Civil War also contributed to dissatisfaction among many Indian tribes that had signed treaties when the government delayed or failed to deliver promised annuities and food.

The Dakota War of 1862 saw Sioux in Minnesota attacking not only isolated farmsteads, but towns and settlements, killing an estimated 750 settlers and soldiers. Despite the original Indian belligerents surrendering later in the year, fighting spread west. The US Army was forced to become more active in the west, and a number of significant battles between the Sioux and the US occurred during the period 1863-1864.[14]

In the spring of 1863, a trail was blazed that linked the Emigrant Road with the newly discovered gold fields of Montana, cutting 400 miles off the previous route.[15] Additionally, the end of the Civil War in 1865 marked the beginning of a change from

what had been a trickle of white emigrants to a flood. The result was a predictable increase in conflict between Indians and those moving through their territory, especially true in light of their mood following the Sand Creek Massacre. The response by the US Government was a largely ineffectual incursion into the Powder River country led by Brigadier General Patrick Connor. The failure of the campaign led to its termination by the government, and Connor was removed from command.[16] Consequently it did little to halt Indian hostility and if anything, served to increase it.

In late 1865 General William Tecumseh Sherman, riding a wave of popular support following the Civil War, took command of the Military Division of the Missouri, a post he had requested. His initial priority was the protection of the Santa Fe, the Oregon, and the Smoky Hill Trails, but this quickly spread to include the construction crews pushing the railroads west of the Missouri River, and then the Bozeman Trail.[17]

As a result of Connor's failed campaign, a treaty commission traveled along the upper Missouri River seeking right of passageway for trails, roads, and railroads across Indian territories.[18] The result was at least nine treaties of friendship with various Sioux bands. Despite the string of new treaties, what was missing were signatures from the war leaders, including Red Cloud, who had fought General Connor earlier in the year. Once again, the army dispatched messengers from Fort Laramie to call the warrior chiefs to a treaty council.

A large number of Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho attended a treaty conference at Fort Laramie in June, 1866, but the arrival of a large contingent of the 18th Infantry Regiment soured the negotiations. Many of the Indians present abandoned the conference, and the alliance between some of the Sioux bands, the Northern Cheyenne,

and the Northern Arapaho continued to grow stronger. From that point on, any soldiers or civilians using the Bozeman Trail were susceptible to attacks and harassment by the Indian alliance, which continued to grow as more disaffected and disillusioned Indians decided to defy US expansion. The army built a number of forts along the trail as a method of protection, but the force available was unable to both effectively defend the forts as well as conduct a mobile defense of a corridor of approximately five hundred miles.

Despite the campaign lasting nearly two years, only three major battles were fought. The first occurred in late 1866 when the Indians defeated the army in what became known as the "Fetterman Massacre." The second and third occurred within a day of each other and formed part of a coordinated attack against two separate forts along the Bozeman Trail. In what later became known as the "Hayfield" and "Wagon Box" fights, large groups of predominantly Cheyenne and Sioux warriors respectively suffered tactical defeats at the hands of well-armed and well entrenched soldiers and civilians. Despite achieving tactical victory in these battles, the government concluded that a peaceful settlement was the quickest and most appropriate solution.

Following months of meetings and tense negotiations between peace commissioners and various bands, the majority of the belligerent Indians signed the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie in April of that year. Red Cloud refused to sign the treaty until the United States closed the trail and abandoned the forts. This occurred in August of 1868, and Red Cloud signed the treaty in November that year, vowing to never again fight the US.

Red Cloud's unprecedented operational victory was short lived and he alienated many Sioux when he accepted peace. Sitting Bull, a Hunkpapa Sioux who would become infamous to whites during the Sioux War of 1876, conveyed his unwillingness to abide by the treaty to both Red Cloud and the peace commission. Many of Red Cloud's own Oglala aligned with militant leaders such as Crazy Horse, and travelled west to link up with the still defiant Hunkpapa.

True to his word, Red Cloud never again engaged in war with the United States. He was subject to an effective information operation a few years later when he toured Washington DC and witnessed for himself the true might of his erstwhile enemy. Despite Red Cloud's acquiescence to US power, conflict between the US and the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho continued, reaching a crescendo at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. After that spectacular Indian victory, the army relentlessly pursued those who chose to remain free from the reservation system until they accepted defeat. Militarily, the Sioux ceased to be a threat after 1877, but their spirit was finally broken at Wounded Knee in 1890, ending over thirty years of conflict that was the Plains Indian Wars.

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[1] Craig W. Mastapeter, "The Instrument of National Power: Achieving the Strategic Advantage in a Changing World" (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2008), 179, accessed 29 March 2016, http://jfsc.ndu.edu/Portals/72/Documents/library/Bibliographies/Elements_of_National_Power.pdf.

[2] Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), I-11 – I-12.

[3] Robert B Strassler, ed. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

[4] Ernest A Ritter. *Shaka Zulu* (London: Viking Press, 1978).

[5] Douglas B. Ball, *Financial Failure and Confederate Defeat* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

[6] Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, I-12.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., I-13.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Also known variously as the Bozeman Trail War and the Powder River War.

[11] Edward Lazarus, *Black Hills White Justice: The Sioux Nation Versus the United States, 1775 to the Present* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers 1991), 16-20.

[12] Ibid., 19.

[13] Ibid., 20.

[14] The Battle of Big Mound on 24 July 1863; the Battle of Dead Buffalo Lake on 26 July 1863; the Battle of Stony Lake on 28 July 1863; the Battle of Whitestone Hill on 3 September 1863; and the Battle of Killdeer Mountain on 28 July 1864.

[15] Dorothy M Johnson, *The Bloody Bozeman: The Perilous Trail to Montana's Gold* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company 1971), 3.

[16] Le Roy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Powder River Campaigns and Sawyers' Expedition of 1865* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1961), 26.

[17] Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964), 97-99.

[18] Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 123.

CHAPTER 2

THE APPROACH TO WAR

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the context within which Red Cloud's War occurred. It will outline the diplomatic relationship that existed between the United States and the various tribes involved, the economics that affected these relationships, the military activity that enforced and influenced these relationships, and the opinions that underpinned all of these aspects. The evidence suggests that within the US Government and society at large, opinions on how to solve the "Indian Question" differed substantially. Despite this difference of opinion, war for control of the northern plains was inevitable due to the inescapable desire and need of the United States to spread across the continent.

The term "Red Cloud's War" is a misnomer. Rather, the conflict between the US and combined Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho forces between 1866 and 1868 should be viewed as a campaign within the broader war against the Plains Indians. While it is difficult to ascertain when the Plains Indian Wars started, it is generally accepted that the Grattan Massacre of 1854 marks its beginning. It ended with the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1890.[1] Accepting that, a study of the Red Cloud campaign must begin with an understanding of the strategic, societal, and governmental context within which it occurred.

Policy

The Bureau of Indian Affairs was established by the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, in 1824 as part of his department. It was designed to manage and direct all

matters arising from the United States' relations with Indians. It operated informally until 1832, when Congress authorized the appointment of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs under the direction of the Secretary of War. The United States Government, from 1789 onwards, had three executive departments: the Department of State, the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of War. In 1849, a fourth department, the Department of the Interior, was created to administer the United States' internal affairs. The remit of the new department was wide, and included Indians. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was therefore transferred to the Department of the Interior that same year.[2] Until the creation of the Department of the Interior, the War Department had the responsibility of diplomacy and treaty-making with Indians on behalf of the United States. In 1849, its role changed to one of providing support to another department's policy.

Up until the middle of the 19th century, the United States had followed what was termed the policy of separation with regards to the Indians.[3] This policy sought to physically separate Americans and Indians, and limit interaction between the two. It became law in 1830 with the ratification of the Indian Removal Bill which legally empowered the US to appropriate tribal territory and remove Indians in the southern United States to land west of the Mississippi River.

Separation only remained a viable policy for a short period, until the idea of Manifest Destiny, a concept rooted in colonial history, was reasserted. Manifest Destiny held that it was inevitable and desirable that Americans spread "civilization" across the continent. Once set in motion, the streams of emigrants travelling across territory previously designated as Permanent Indian Territory in 1825, or labeled "the Great

American Desert," could not be stopped by the government even if it had wished to do so.

The cumulative effects of the emigrants crossing the plains along fixed trails proved dire for the Indians. Illnesses for which the Indians had no natural defenses had devastated their populations in the preceding decades. The buffalo herds were divided by the trails that began to spread across the plains. First, flotillas of emigrants travelled in wagons, and then the railroad advanced. Both resulted in the degradation of the herds. This not only threatened food sources, it exacerbated inter-tribal conflict as it forced groups to migrate further afield to gain access to game and compete for the same resources. This led to an embittering of Indian attitudes towards emigrants, and their frustrations began to manifest themselves in the "taxing" of travelers and increasing instances of violence.

The opinions of those seeking to spread US civilization, and public opinion in the east, placed pressure upon the government, which was forced to take action. This resulted in the building of forts along some of the trails, and the deployment of troops to first, protect civilians traveling along them, and second, punish those Indians found to be guilty of harassment. The army's use of both mounted cavalry and infantry proved problematic, as mobility on the plains was key. The strategy of small outposts not only proved ineffective, but also served to arouse the anger of the Plains Indians; the frequency and severity of Indian attacks rose sharply.[4]

From 1840 onwards, the idea that the US should afford the Indians the huge expanse of land that was the Trans-Mississippi west became difficult for the government to support. Not only did emigrants increasingly use the area for transit to the west coast,

but economic interests emerged in the form of the railroads.[5] Only two options appeared open to the government: submit to the will and desires of the electorate by permitting unhindered American access to the region, or protect the Indians and their right to hold the land from white intrusion. The United States Government was caught between public pressure and its own treaty guarantees. Politically, acquiescence to the will and desires of the electorate, which did not include Indians, was the only option.

In his annual report for 1848, the Commissioner for Indian Affairs, William Medill, suggested that the government assign Indian tribes to smaller, well-defined tracts of land. White people would be free to occupy and utilize the country around them, and the government would prevent Indian interference. The United States would protect the Indians, turn them into farmers, and slowly civilize them through Christianity.[6] On appointment to Secretary of the Interior in 1850, Alexander Stuart agreed, stating that the policy of separation, "except under exceptional circumstances, must necessarily be abandoned."[7]

The subsequent policy was that of "concentration"[8] and the reservation system. The concept of land reserved for Indians was not a new one; Indian Territory in what became Oklahoma was a vast tract of land that had originally been set aside to accommodate displaced tribes from the east. The difference was that this policy sought to drastically reduce the territory assigned to Indians and thereby open huge areas of the plains for transit and settlement. It should therefore be viewed as an evolution of the policy of separation rather than an entirely new policy.

In February 1851, Congress passed the Indian Appropriation Act, which set aside $100,000 for treaty negotiations[9] and authorized the government to designate certain

areas as reserved for Indians. At the same time, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was reorganized and enlarged; three superintendents of Indian affairs were installed to oversee the tribes "east of the Rocky Mountains, and north of New Mexico and Texas."[10] It was against this backdrop that the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed.

The diplomatic start point for the United States Government's dealings with the Indians of the northern plains, in its pursuance of the policy of concentration, was the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. It established formal relations with many of the tribes and provided security for travelers through a number of means. First, the treaty sought to bring about peace between the Indian signatories themselves: "The aforesaid nations . . . agree to abstain in future from all hostilities whatever against each other . . . and to make an effective and lasting peace."[11] This measure was meant be enforced through the chiefs on the Indian side, and Indian commissioners and representatives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the US side.

Second, it attempted to set tribal boundaries; "The aforesaid Indian nations do hereby recognize and acknowledge the following tracts of country . . . as their respective territories."[12] Third, it recognized the "right of the United States Government to establish roads, military and other posts"[13] in the tribal territories outlined within the treaty. Additionally, the treaty contained a term binding the Indians to "make restitution or satisfaction for any wrongs committed . . . by any band or individual . . . on the people of the United States, whilst lawfully residing in or passing through their respective territories."[14]

From the Indians' perspective, the treaty contained two positive terms. Article III committed the United States to "protect the aforesaid Indian nations against the

commission of all depredations by the people of the said United States."[15] Article VII provided for the payment to each of the Indian nations "the sum of fifty thousand dollars per annum for the term of ten years."[16] The original negotiations resulted in an agreement of a fifty year term, but Congress reduced the term to ten years, with an option for an additional five years. This amendment was allegedly communicated to all Indian signatories, but has been disputed, most notably in 1868 by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs,[17] and more recently by lawyers examining the treatment of Native Americans within the context of the treaty system.[18] In applying an Anglo-American concept of leadership as a framework, the treaty attempted to designate "principals or head-chiefs"[19] for each of the nations and sought to commit the Indians to recognizing the power of these individuals. Additionally, it outlined how the United States could withhold all or portions of the promised annuities from the Indians should violations of the treaty occur.

There were a number of issues with this treaty that rendered it largely untenable. The concept of tribal territories, as understood by the US, was almost an alien concept to the Indians. Although it is true that the Sioux laid claim to ownership of territory that included the Black Hills area, the Indians did not fully understand the idea of sole title that permeated Anglo-Saxon culture. Many of the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho all hunted in the Powder River country for example. The nomadic nature of the Plains Indians meant that they were not, at this stage of acquaintance with the United States, willing to recognize boundaries over which they were not allowed to cross. Historical tribal enmities still existed, many of these linked to access to fertile hunting lands. By restricting Indian access to certain areas, in conjunction to ever

dwindling numbers of bison, the US actually encouraged more competition between the tribes, thereby increasing the likelihood of inter-tribal conflict.

The concept of centralized control within a tribe or even a band was largely foreign; Plains Indian culture recognized few fixed titles or ranks as understood by European cultures. Robert M. Utley has suggested that the tribal institution of the chief was strengthened by the treaty system, especially through the use of head-men as points of contact for lump sum payments and the distribution of gifts,[20] but the authority of the chief was by no means absolute. The Plains Indians conducted a consensus based political system,[21] where individuals derived power through an ability to command respect for their decisions, and by achieving consensus.[22] This meant that an individual's power, influence, and authority could change over time.

The fact that Indian leaders were not necessarily empowered to speak on behalf of all band or tribal members was problematic for US treaty-makers and Indian signatories alike. The US needed to deal with a manageable amount of representatives, but by doing so could not have confidence in the binding nature, and therefore future success, of a treaty. The Indian signatories on the other hand were often in no real position to speak on behalf of those they signed for, nor did they always understand the consequences of doing so.[23]

It is almost certain that at times American negotiators and Indian agents were aware that the gaining of signatures on a treaty meant little or nothing in terms of tribal assent[24], and that expediency drove them to accept them as such. However, it is also likely that on many occasions, cultural differences led to a misplaced belief on the part of

whites, in the power of a chief or headman to speak on behalf of his people. It is therefore wrong to suggest that the US entered into all treaty negotiations in a cynical fashion.

One of the economic by-products of the treaty system was the payment of annuities over a period of years. This system had two major unintended consequences. The first was that the system was susceptible to abuse. Indian agents handled the payment of annuities, as well as the distribution of food, tools, and other items. These payments were often further routed through designated chiefs. Corruption was rife and there were many instances of Indian agents, unscrupulous traders, and on occasion tribal chiefs purportedly representing the interests of their people, defrauding the Indians of their lawful gifts.[25]

The second consequence encouraged a dependency of Indians on the US Government. From the government's point of view, forcing the Indians to become dependent on handouts, while running counter to the political and economic spirit of the age, was a necessary step in forcing them to abandon their nomadic culture and adopt a "civilized" agricultural lifestyle. It was during this transition from independent hunter to independent farmer where the difficulties lay. When supplies were delayed or failed to materialize, Indian reactions, stemming from desperation, could be unpredictable and often violent.

White opinion towards Indians at this time varied widely. For the most part, those living in closer proximity to Indians and those with economic interests in Indian Territory held more antagonistic views than those in the east. The idea that the government should reserve large areas of valuable land for people who were either unwilling or unable to take advantage of its economic potential chafed farmers, speculators, and railroaders

alike.[26] Once again the thirst for land and resources by the citizenry of the United States was pitted against the stipulations of treaties with the Indians.

Politically there existed some support for a restriction of white encroachment into Indian country, but this was often linked to other political motivations. In May 1854, Senator William H. Seward argued against establishing territorial government in Nebraska because of the tribes present, fourteen of which had been placed there as a result of the Indian Removal Act. During the same debate, Congressman Samuel Walley lamented the situation faced by tribes forcibly removed to Indian Country and were facing further removals. Both individuals represented eastern states[27] with no material economic interest in the land west of the Missouri River. Additionally, and potentially more importantly, both individuals were ideologically opposed to the spread of slavery, and therefore politically opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which proposed allowing territories to join the Union as free or slave-holding states. It is therefore entirely feasible that this "support" for the rights of Indians was actually a method of making the bill unpalatable enough for it to be defeated.[28]

In contrast, frontier states frequently held an opposing view, often directly linked to economics. Congressman Thomas Benton, of Missouri, had been the chairman of the Indian committee during the drafting and passage of the Indian Removal Act, which created Indian country. He was an active proponent of white settlement west of the Missouri and the removal of Indians to smaller, more remote locations. This, he argued, would allow the transcontinental railroad to proceed unhindered, and would bring huge economic benefits and federal assistance to the frontier state of Missouri.[29]

Across the nation, opinion towards the Indians remained divided and open to influence. The press in both the west and east frequently reflected the views of those in local positions of power and influence, often acting as the mouthpieces of their politically motivated financial backers and owners. Lucian Eastin, the editor-owner of both *The Gazette* in St Joseph, Missouri, and *The Kansas Weekly Herald* in Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, was a supporter of Congressman Benton and often wrote editorials advocating his views on Indian ownership of land.[30] Even those charged with treaty negotiations sometimes disagreed that treaties were worth pursuing. The Indian Agent for the Upper Platte and Arkansas Agency at the time of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, Thomas Fitzpatrick, advocated first "soundly thrashing"[31] the Indians militarily before attempting to confine them to reservations.

Despite some outbreaks of violence, the general consensus of federal officials during the decade following the 1851 treaty was that the policy of concentration had been largely successful and was the long-term solution to the Indian Question. [32] The government also began to realize that it would need to enforce the policy itself through the Departments of War, and the Interior, rather than rely on the cooperation of the Indians or its own citizens.[33]

The Civil War

The Civil War had a significant short and long term impact on Indians throughout the continental United States. The tribes of the northern plains were not directly involved in fighting, as the Five Civilized Tribes were.[34] However, the effects of the war were felt early on and ultimately accelerated the decline in relations between the US and the Indians. At the outbreak of the war, the Indians watched as the plains largely emptied of

regular troops. Many of the Indians understood that the whites were fighting themselves, and were happy to see them depart, but some bands had already become dependent on supplies from the US.

The Santee Sioux experienced severe food shortages in 1862. Two treaties in the preceding decade had concentrated the Santee; the first created a reservation along both the north and south banks of the Minnesota River measuring 20 miles by 150 miles. The second treaty, enforced after Minnesota achieved statehood, halved the Sioux land and pushed them south of the river. Both treaties aimed to not only concentrate the Santee, but turn them into an agrarian society. A severe winter followed a disastrous corn crop in 1861, and game on the much reduced reservation became ever scarcer. The result was a starving people who became further reliant on food and annuities that the US Government was legally obliged to provide.

The Civil War resulted in interruptions, and sometimes failures in the delivery of supplies and the payment of annuities, as money and effort were diverted towards the prosecution of the war. The Santee Sioux became desperate. In a typical comment of the time, epitomizing the opinion that many frontier whites had of the Indians, one of the traders who handled the Indians' food allotments was heard to say, "Let them eat grass and their own dung."[35] What started as a few isolated incidents of Indians looting agencies soon escalated into a general uprising against all whites in the area and resulted in up to 600 civilian deaths and 140 military casualties.[36]

The US soon gained control of the situation but used the incident as an excuse to remove all of the Sioux from Minnesota. The government settled the exiles on reservations in eastern Dakota Territory, closer to their Western Sioux cousins,[37] whose

attitudes towards the US were further influenced by the treatment of the Santee.[38] The Western Sioux noted the treatment of the Santee by the army and the government, and it helped to persuade them of the need to resist both US encroachment of their territory and the reservation system.

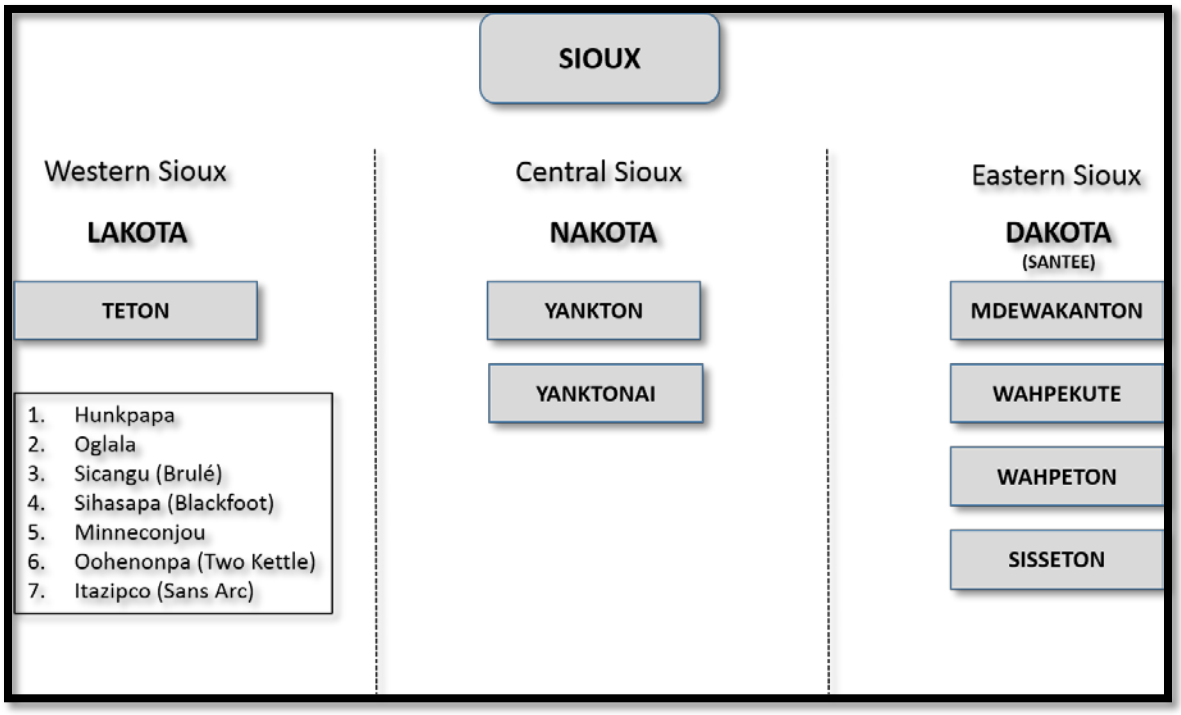

Figure 2. Sioux Nation

Source: Created by author.

The uprising is significant for a number reasons. First, it illustrates a number of issues and tensions in terms of opinion between the military, the government, and the citizens. Second, it shows how public opinion influenced the actions of some military and political leaders. General John Pope, commander of the Department of the Northwest, had assumed responsibility for conducting the punitive war against the Santee. His orders

to the Third Minnesota Volunteer Regiment were explicit in their contempt for the Indians: "They are to be treated as maniacs or wild beasts."[39] The *St Cloud Democrat,* a weekly newspaper in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, called for the government to "exterminate the wild beasts," calling the Indians hyenas and stating that it was the citizens' business to "kill the lazy vermin, and make sure of killing them."[40] Following the defeat of the Santee and the capture of nearly fifteen hundred individuals, General Pope convened a military tribunal and tried 392 prisoners accused of crimes. After ten days, 303 were condemned to death. Alexander Ramsay, governor of Minnesota and a former Indian agent, telegraphed President Lincoln and suggested that civilians would seek violent revenge against Indians in general were he not to approve the executions.

Despite both the military commander and the governor taking a hard line, not all of the voices heard in Washington were those advocating extermination and severe reprisals. Bishop Henry Whipple, who would go on to become both a celebrated and castigated Indian reformer, interceded with Lincoln on behalf of the Sioux. The Secretary of the Interior, Caleb Smith, as well as Commissioner William Dole, also argued against a mass execution.

The President, believing the number of condemned to be too high, sent a telegram to Pope requesting an indication of the "more guilty and influential."[41] Pope's initial reply was to suggest that the condemned were all guilty of murder and rape to some degree. Furthermore, he claimed that if the condemned were not all executed, he thought it "nearly impossible to prevent the indiscriminate massacre, by private citizens, of all the Indians–old men, women, and children."[42] Lincoln was not satisfied, and commuted the sentences of all but 39 of the Indians, 38 of whom were executed.

The execution was delayed by a week due to the angry mood of the local population in Minnesota; the authorities wanted to avoid a "fearful collision between U.S. forces and the citizens."[43] It is noteworthy that in the face of severe, potentially violent anti-Indian sentiment from the populace, and against the advice of the tactical and operational level commanders, the president saw fit to commute 264 of the death sentences to imprisonment. In a statement to the Senate, Lincoln described his goal as one of striking a balance between clemency and cruelty in an effort to avoid further violence.[44]

This episode highlights a substantial difference of opinion that existed between politicians, local authorities, military leaders, the popular press, and the public with regards to Indians in general, and how the United States should treat them. This difference of opinion would continue into Red Cloud's War and exacerbate political divisions between government departments. The result would be a failure to formulate a coherent and coordinated government approach.

The initial withdrawal of regular soldiers at the outbreak of the Civil War also led to both white settlers and Indians interpreting treaty stipulations and subsequently arbitrating and enforcing quarrels with each other. This served to increase animosity and incidents of violence. The war also resulted in the replacement of regular troops with state militias and volunteers. The recruitment to these units came largely from local citizens who had vested interests in protecting local white populations. Their strategies differed from federal policy, influenced as they were by local concerns and interests.[45] These units also tended to be more anti-Indian in outlook and men with similar outlooks led them.[46]

The US considered the massacre of a peaceful Cheyenne village on the Sand Creek Reservation in 1864 as an aberration. Thomas W. Dunlay, in his book *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, attributes the phrase "nits make lice" to Col Chivington, the commander at Sand Creek, as his reasoning for allegedly ordering his men to kill all of the Indians, regardless of age or sex.[47] The incident resulted in investigations and condemnation within the US, but it enraged many of the Plains Indians and fanned the flames for further conflict.

Public attention at the time was largely focused on the Civil War, but opinion on the Sand Creek incident was once again divided between those in proximity to the Indian threat, and those further to the east. In a display of anti-Indian sentiment, up to one hundred Indian scalps taken from Sand Creek were displayed during the intermission of a stage show in Denver, to a rapturous welcome.[48] Editorials in newspapers such as *The Rocky Mountain News* and *The Denver News* hailed the incident as a great victory and heaped praise upon Chivington and his unit. Regardless of public opinion, of which the Indians were ignorant, the Sand Creek Massacre encouraged many of the Northern Cheyenne, and their Northern Arapaho allies, to join with the Western Sioux in general resistance to the US.

For its part, the US intensified diplomacy with the traditional enemies of the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. Throughout the campaigns that followed, newly displaced Winnebago Indians served as scouts and fighters. The army also used increasing numbers of Pawnee, as well as some Sioux. As with volunteers, the use of Indians in combat against other Indians presented some issues. Acceptable conduct during warfare, as understood by some of the "Army" Indians, was defined by cultural

and tribal enmities. These enmities sometimes resulted in depredations and the slaughter of women and children,[49] further exacerbating tribal animosities, and increasing hatred of white people.

The Civil War lowered the strategic priority of Indian affairs, but the government could not ignore them completely. From an economic perspective, access to gold and silver in the west was important to the Union's war effort. Politically, the support of western states was vital to the Union's prosecution of the war. The war did little to slow the westward flow of migrants; The Homestead Act of 1862 encouraged western migration by providing settlers 160 acres of "public land." [50] The Act led to the distribution, or redistribution, of millions of acres of public land. The Indians considered much of the public land to be a part of their territory, and conflict was therefore inevitable.

All of these factors meant that attending to Indian affairs in the west was an inescapable reality for the government. While the outbreak of war briefly exposed settlers and lines of communication to Indian threats through a shortfall in army manpower, these shortfalls were quickly rectified. Ironically, the Civil War saw a huge increase in US Army presence on the northern plains. By 1865 there were approximately twenty thousand uniformed troops in the west, almost double the number that were present in 1860,[51] although many of these were volunteers. The general increase in hostility between whites and Indians during the Civil War helped convince the US that it should pursue and accelerate its policy of concentration.[52] This policy was a major cause not only of Red Cloud's War, but the continuation of the general Plains Indian Wars from the end of the Civil War until 1890.

[1] Sherry Marker, *Plains Indian Wars* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), v.

[2] Edward E. Hill, *Guide to Records in the National Archives of the United States Relating to American Indians* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Record Service, 1981), 24.

[3] Philip Weeks. *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820-1890. The American History Series* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1990), 27.

[4] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation.* 59.

[5] Ibid., 59-60.

[6] Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier 1846-1890*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 40.

[7] Ibid., 61.

[8] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation*, 60.

[9] Ibid., 62.

[10] Francis P. Prucha, ed. *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 84.

[11] Ibid., 85.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1868*, 41, accessed 23 March 2016, http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.AnnRep68.

[18] Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: The Early Crusade for Indian Reform*, ed. Andrew F. Rolle (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 75-77.

[19] Prucha, *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 85.

[20] Utley, *The Indian Frontier,* 40.

[21] Robert H. Lowie, *Indians of the Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954), 112-115.

[22] Robert N. Clinton, "Treaties with Native Americans: Iconic Historical Relics or Modern Necessity?" in *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations,* ed. Suzan Shown Harjo (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2013), 19.

[23] Utley, *The Indian Frontier,* 39.

[24] Clinton, "Treaties with Native Americans," 19.

[25] Ibid., 40-41.

[26] William E. Unrau, *The Rise and Fall of Indian Country, 1825-1855* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 126-128, 131.

[27] Seward represented New York and Walley represented Massachusetts.

[28] Walter Stahr, *Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 141-143.

[29] Unrau, *The Rise and Fall of Indian Country*, 132-134.

[30] Ibid., 135.

[31] Utley, *The Indian Frontier,* 59.

[32] The experience in Texas, where Indians were removed from the state in order to protect them from Texans, was considered an anomaly.

[33] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation,* 71.

[34] The Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Cherokee's initial alliance with the Confederacy proved disastrous for them after the war and allowed the government to drastically reduce their territories.

[35] William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota,* vol 2 (St Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1924), 232.

[36] Jerry Keenan, *Great Sioux Uprising: Rebellion on the Plains, August-September 1862* (United States of America: Da Capo Press, 2003), 17, 21-22.

[37] Ibid., 82.

[38] Approximately 2,000 Winnebago Indians, traditional enemies of the Sioux and who had played no part in the uprising, were removed from Minnesota at the same time amid a fervently anti-Indian public demand.

[39] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation,* 94.

[40] Chronicling America, "St Cloud Democrat," 13 November 1862, accessed 25 January 2016, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83016836/1862-11-13/ed-1/seq-2/.

[41] Roy Prentice Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, eds. Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 5:493.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Roy Prentice Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Eds. Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 6:7.

[44] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation,* 96.

[45] Bill Yenne, *Indian Wars: The Campaign for the American West* (Pennsylvania: Westholme, 2006), 79.

[46] Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 26.

[47] Ibid., 38.

[48] Sherry Marker, *Plains Indian Wars* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 50.

[49] Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers*, 35.

[50] US Statutes at Large, Vol 12, 37th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1862, 392, accessed 30 March 2016, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage.

[51] Utley, *The Indian Frontier,* 71-72.

[52] Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation,* 75-76.

CHAPTER 3

War for the Bozeman

> [I]t is further agreed by the United States, that within ninety days after the conclusion of peace with all the bands of the Sioux nation, the military posts now established in the territory in this article named shall be abandoned, and that the road leading to them and by them to the settlements in the Territory of Montana shall be closed.[1]

The above terms within the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868 reflect Red Cloud's demands in his war against the United States: the closure of the Bozeman Trail and the removal of the forts protecting it. Some hailed the terms of the treaty, the only one to cede to the demands of the Indians, as evidence of a strategic defeat on the part of the United States.[2] The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it illustrates that the campaign's failure was due to the US's misalignment of the instruments of power, specifically its inability to coordinate its diplomatic and military efforts. Second, it asserts that the US did not suffer a strategic defeat, but rather an operational one. This resulted in an operational pause, enabled by the advance of the transcontinental railroad. It focuses on the war years, 1866 through 1868, but also touches on the years following the war to illustrate the conflict's impact on US Indian policy.

1865–Prelude to War

The end of the Civil War once again forced the United States to review its strategy, policy, and approach with regards to the Indians. Both the military and civilian branches of government agreed with the desired end state envisioned within the policy of concentration; Indians would need to be contained within smaller tracts of land to

facilitate US expansion. They also agreed on the federalization of Indian Affairs; Federal Indian officials and regular army units were to replace governors and local militia.

In September of 1865, Lt Gen William Tecumseh Sherman, a Union hero of the Civil War whose support for a total-war approach was demonstrated during his March to the Sea, was appointed as the commander of the Division of the Missouri, an area covering all territory west of the Mississippi River, north of Texas, and east of Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona. One of his primary tasks was establishing the preeminence of federal direction and authority in the area, and he was firmly of the belief that the army was the only agency that could subdue the west.[3]

The post-war army however faced significant problems. Its volunteer strength of over one million men in May 1865 was reduced to just over two hundred thousand within six months. It was further reduced to just over eleven thousand volunteers by November 1866, and the war-time addition to the personnel establishment disappeared altogether in 1867. Despite calls from some senior army leaders, most notably General Ulysses S. Grant, to increase the size of the regular army, Congress voted on 28 July 1866 to establish it at just under fifty five thousand officers and soldiers.[4]

Reconstruction requirements demanded a sizable effort from this newly reduced army. By 1867 some forty percent of the army, almost twenty two thousand troops, were stationed in the southern states as part of what was effectively an occupation force. Additionally, a further eleven percent, six thousand troops, were required to garrison arsenals and coastal forts in the eastern United States.[5] This left a force of just over twenty seven thousand men, faced with issues as diverse as the French presence in Mexico, deterrence of Mormon armed resistance in Utah, and the threat posed by hostile

Indians.[6] Of the twenty seven thousand, the actual number of combat troops available for use against the Indians was significantly less.

In contrast to the military's approach to Indian affairs, the Department of the Interior was supportive of a more peaceful policy, largely as reaction to the Sand Creek Massacre. As a result, a Joint Special Committee of Congress, under Wisconsin Senator, James Doolittle, was dispatched to ascertain the "condition of the Indian tribes and their treatment by the civil and military authorities of the United States."[7] Additionally, a treaty commission proposed by the governor of Dakota Territory, Newton Edmunds, was sent to negotiate with the Sioux on the upper Missouri. Robert Utley points out that the Edmunds Commission should be considered in the context of local politics and economics rather than as a humanitarian initiative. Governor Edmunds' concern centered on the image and marketability of Dakota. Conflict with the Indians was earning Dakota a reputation as a territory at war. This not only dissuaded immigrants, it cause emigration as settlers feared for themselves and their families.

The commission, in gaining the signatures of a number of Sioux on various insignificant treaties of friendship, was hailed a success and allowed the governor to proclaim peace. Unfortunately, those Indians that signed the treaties were already largely peaceful towards the United States and the document did not include any of the bands who were fighting on the plains that summer. However, the apparent success of the Edmunds Commission in the eyes of the public led to further support for a "Peace Policy."[8]

It is apparent that the civilian and military arms of the federal government held distinctly different views on the approach required to achieve the end state of

concentration. The Department of War viewed its role as the subjugator of Indians through the army, allowing for diplomacy as a result of military victory. The Department of the Interior however regarded the Bureau of Indian Affairs as the executor of diplomacy, with the military in a supporting role. Philip Weeks accurately labels this dichotomy as the "Peace Policy" versus the "Force Policy".[9]

The First Powder River Campaign

A rising tide of violence between whites and Indians erupted into open warfare, following the November attack at Sand Creek, in the central and northern plains in 1865.[10] Raids and massed attacks along the Platte River resulted in the sacking of Julesburg, the killing of civilians and soldiers, and the virtual isolation of Denver from the east for over a month.[11] The weather prevented the army from mounting an immediate response, and this enabled the various belligerent bands to move northwest towards the Powder River. In response, the army eventually mounted a campaign under Brigadier General Patrick Connor but because of logistic issues, this did not occur until August. The initial plan envisioned a force of 4,500 troops conducting a three-pronged offensive in the Powder River country, but nearly 2,000 of these troops never materialized. Demobilization following the end of the Civil War caused the majority of the shortfall, although desertions also had an effect.[12]

At the very outset of the campaign, it was apparent that even within the military, the approach to combatting the Indians was inconsistent at varying levels of command. Major General John Pope, now Commanding General of the Department of the Missouri, in correspondence with Major General Dodge, his subordinate, described Connor's order to his subordinates to "not receive any overtures of peace or submission from Indians, but

. . . attack and kill every male Indian over twelve years of age" as "atrocious" and a "direct violation" of his own orders.[13] This was in contrast to his comments during the 1862 campaign against the Santee Sioux.[14] This inconsistency was most likely a symptom of the freedom with which commanders had previously been able to conduct campaigns. Whatever the reason, Pope was clearly concerned with the political ramifications of such an action, and described it as potentially "disgraceful to the government."[15]

The campaign achieved very little in terms of military effect with many labelling it a defeat,[16] but it was notable for a number of reasons. The first was the construction of Fort Reno, originally named Fort Connor, on the upper reaches of the Powder River. Designed to anchor the trail, the fort firmly entrenched the Bozeman as the only viable route to the gold town of Virginia City,[17] and would become a central point of negotiation in 1868. The second was the use of Indians as part of the US force; the US Army employed Winnebago, Pawnee, and Omaha warriors as salaried scouts.[18] Third, attempted mutinies put down through threats of violence plagued the campaign, highlighting the issues the army still faced with regards to its Civil War volunteers. Finally, the financial cost of the campaign was significant. A report in January 1868 estimated that the 1865 Powder River campaign cost the government over $30 million.[19]

The campaign exposed some of the opinions and attitudes of the Indians. In a report following a visit to the Powder River area, Dodge indicated that Cheyenne anger over the Sand Creek attack was high, citing an interpreter's comment that they would negotiate only after the government hanged Col Chivington. The same report suggested that the Indians were confident they could successfully fight the United States, and that

they were aware that the army would withdraw its troops during the fall, giving them time to recover.[20]

In his campaign report of 1 November 1865, Maj Gen Dodge blamed a number of factors for the campaign's dismal results: poor weather, poor guides, and the actions or lack thereof, of Connor's subordinates. In fact, taking all of the obstacles faced into account, Dodge appears to have viewed the campaign as a relative success.[21] Despite this somewhat overly optimistic view, he did make an assertion that the most effective way of protecting the overland routes appeared to be the maintenance of a mobile strike force within the Indians' territory that could threaten both their war parties and villages.[22] The absence of such a force during the war for the Bozeman Trail the following year significantly limited the army's ability to conduct any sort of aggressive defense of the route.

In many respects, this initial incursion into the Powder River country should be viewed as part of what is called Red Cloud's War. Its aim was twofold. First, it sought to punish the Indians for attacks on those routes running close to Indian lands and provide security to said routes. Second, and most importantly, it was to clear the way for roads such as the Bozeman Trail to run through Indian Territory.[23] The campaign, apart from further angering many Indians, convinced General Sherman to accelerate the construction of further forts along the Bozeman Trail to secure it.[24] These forts served as a focus for Indian hostility in the conflict that followed.

As part of the federalization of the frontier, the autonomy that frontier commanders had enjoyed during the Civil War years with volunteer forces came to an end. This theoretically forced the army to better coordinate and nest its operations and

plans with those of other government departments. Additionally, the notion of a purely military solution to the Indian Question had been severely discredited by the lack of tangible results following Connor's 1865 campaign. It was described later by an Indian Peace Commission report as "something more than useless and expensive; it was dishonorable to the nation, and disgraceful to those that had originated it."[25] Furthermore, it highlighted a "futility in conquering a peace."[26] The illusion of tranquility that the peace policy promised supported the view of both Indian Reformers and the Department of the Interior that diplomacy in of itself was a viable option.[27]

Red Cloud's War occurred during a transition period for the United States. The Civil War had ended, but reconstruction was only beginning, and caused a significant drain on military, economic, and political resources. Federalization of the frontier was supposed to result in a more centralized and coherent approach from the regular army in concert with other departments. The reality however was that the army became a victim in a situation somewhat of its own making. "Hawks" within its own senior leadership, such as U.S. Grant, William T. Sherman, and Philip H. Sheridan, as well as the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, pushed for a more aggressive approach towards the Indians, without having the resources or political support they needed. Meanwhile, the "doves" of the Department of the Interior, including Secretary Orville Browning, with support from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and members of the Senate Indian Committee, argued for primacy over Indian Affairs on the plains.

Rivalry regarding Indian affairs was not restricted to the Executive Branch. Within the Legislative Branch, rifts between the Senate and Congress emerged. Congress resented appropriating funds to execute provisions of treaties it had no influence over; the

Senate alone ratified treaties. Additionally, Congress was more sympathetic to periodic calls for the transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs back to the Department of War, whereas the Senate was not.[28] The result was a situation where the army believed itself undermanned for the task of enforcing Indian policy and unsupported by the Senate.

General Pope's August 1865 letter to the newly appointed commander for the District of Nebraska, Brigadier General Frank Wheaton, reflected the reality of this transition period on the army's operational approach. Pope wanted to see a "return to a purely defensive arrangement for the security of the overland routes."[29] This desire appears partly in response to the political view that diplomacy held primacy, and partly as a pragmatic approach following the reduction in the number of troops available to him. The primacy of diplomacy continued to rankle many within the War Department and the army. General Pope, in a later letter to General Sherman in the spring of 1866, expressed his lack of faith in the treaty process. He stated that he did "not consider the treaties lately made with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahos . . . worth the paper they are written on."[30] He further predicted that war would break out before the beginning of winter in 1866.

In late 1865, following Connor's expedition, the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho, already angered by the growing number of gold-seekers travelling through their country along the Bozeman Trail, were enraged. The United States Government, for its part, desired a full implementation of its concentration policy on the northern plains, and wanted to both protect Americans traversing the west in response to the discovery of gold, and secure a land corridor for the advance of the railroad.[31] Following the apparent success of the Edmunds Commission, and in what may have been a test case for the peace policy, the Department of the Interior decided to pursue an approach that saw

treaty commissions dispatched to Fort Laramie to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the Indian problem.

Indian attacks on emigrant trains, cavalry detachments, stagecoaches, and cattle herds had resumed almost immediately following the end of the Powder River Campaign, and the army's pursuit of war parties invariably resulted in nothing but exhausted horses and frustrated soldiers.[32] The Indians mostly struck in small war parties and if pursued, split up. The army was unable to interdict fleeing Indians as the troop numbers simply weren't available. In response, and in light of the "successful" peace initiatives on the southern plains and with the Sioux on the upper Missouri, the Department of the Interior once again sent a treaty commission to Fort Laramie to seek both peace with the Powder River Sioux, and right of passage through their territory.

The army, despite not necessarily supporting the treaty process, found itself to be in a similar position to that which led to the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. It did not have the troops available to defeat the Indians so it agreed to peace through diplomacy in order to offset its weakness.[33] This is enlightening. Having failed to subdue the Indians in 1865, the army appears to have resigned itself to diplomacy, and what James Olson indicates as a reliance on the Indians to keep the peace.[34] The broader implication is that at the micro level, the army was attempting to influence the Executive Branch's use of the instruments of power according to its own agenda.

In early March 1866, a band of Brulé Sioux under Spotted Tail arrived at Fort Laramie to discuss the treaty, and much to the surprise of the commander present, Colonel Henry Maynadier, Red Cloud arrived four days later to discuss peace. While not a chief, Red Cloud was a respected war leader and spokesman for many of the more

hostile and disgruntled Powder River Sioux, especially the Oglala, the Miniconjou, and the Sans Arc. He had also gained a reputation amongst the whites as a man who was able to unify the otherwise individualistic Indians.[35] That he was able to unite various bands and tribal groups was remarkable, and a testament to his personality and charisma.

He and the president of the treaty commission, E.B Taylor, agreed via the telegraph at Fort Laramie to hold the treaty council in June. There are numerous reasons given for Red Cloud's initial agreement to negotiate peace, ranging from his identification of an opportunity to secure gifts and food for his people,[36] to a genuine desire to come to a peaceful solution to the invasion of Sioux territory.[37] Regardless, Taylor interpreted his agreement to attend the treaty council as a clear sign of peaceful intent. In a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, D.N. Cooley, he wrote "There is every reason to hope, and no cause to doubt that a lasting peace will easily be effected with the hitherto hostile tribes of the Upper Platte, including the Sioux, Arapahoes [sic] and Cheyennes."[38]

This optimism seems to have stemmed from the perceived economic destitution of the Sioux at the time, and is an example of how the economic instrument of power subtly influenced and colored negotiations. Negotiators used promises of gifts and food to induce Indians to attend the peace conferences. A widespread belief amongst those Americans on the frontier was that the economic base on which the Indians depended, the dwindling numbers of bison and other game, was so degraded that they were willing to sacrifice almost anything in order to receive government handouts.[39]

In May, Red Cloud arrived with his Oglala, and together with the Brulé and various bands of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, formed a camp of around two thousand

people near the gates of Fort Laramie.[40] Formal treaty proceedings began on 5 June, but this was further delayed until 13 June on Red Cloud's request, as more Sioux were expected. On the same day that negotiations reconvened, and in a classic case of differing departments within the government failing to effectively coordinate, approximately seven hundred members of the 18th Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Henry Carrington arrived near the fort. They had marched from Fort Kearney, Nebraska, under orders to build forts along the Bozeman trail to protect anticipated heavy traffic to Montana in the coming summer.[41]

It is hard to believe that the Department of War was actively working against the Department of the Interior in the timing of Carrington's arrival at Fort Laramie, given the army's relative weakness on the northern plains at the time. However, at best this incident exemplified the lack of coordination that existed between the departments and points to a dysfunctional relationship that undermined what each was trying to achieve. In fact, in a stinging summary of the relationship between the two departments, a later report by the Indian Peace Commission on 7 January 1868 noted that "the civil and military departments of our government cannot, or will not, understand each other."[42]

From an informational standpoint, the timing of the arrival of the troops was disastrous. The Indians in attendance were angered by what they viewed as a cynical deployment of troops prior to the conclusion of treaty negotiations. So incensed was Red Cloud that he and his Oglala struck camp and departed early without signing the treaty. The conference continued following Red Cloud's departure, and a treaty was indeed formalized. In a fashion reminiscent of the Edmunds Commission the previous autumn, agents induced friendly Indians to sign another treaty of friendship. The treaty did not

address the central issue of the Bozeman Trail, it only garnered the agreement of Indians who routinely lived outside of the Powder River. Many of those Sioux from bands that chose to stay and conclude the treaty, such as the Brulé, refused to sign, and sought Red Cloud's group to join them in defiance.[43]

It is impossible to accurately predict whether Red Cloud at that time would have signed a treaty granting the US access to the Bozeman Trail. His actions later during his war for the trail suggest that it was unlikely. The Indian Bureau however placed blame for the failure of the treaty squarely on Carrington, and therefore the army. In his annual report of 1867, the Commissioner for Indian Affairs wrote that "Carrington's arrival was unfortunate, and it undoubtedly triggered Red Cloud's flare-up."[44] In its response, the War Department claimed that Taylor was aware of Carrington's proposed movements and had raised no objections.[45]

Regardless of blame, the perception of US treachery in this instance led to a strengthening of the alliance that already existed between many of the Sioux bands, the Northern Cheyenne, and the Northern Arapaho. In an unprecedented diplomatic move, Red Cloud even made overtures to the Sioux's traditional enemy, the Crow. He sought cooperation against the US in return for hunting grounds that had once been theirs. Although unsuccessful, some army scouts reported that elements of the Crow's young warriors had seriously considered the offer to join what were now termed as "hostiles."[46]

Despite Taylor's objections, and in an informational failure, rumors began to circulate that the treaty was meaningless without Red Cloud's agreement. *The Omaha Herald*, in July 1866, described the treaty process as "the Laramie abortion."[47] It claimed that the treaty would not meet the interests of the people. Taylor continued to defend his

part in the treaty. He blamed a small number of Sioux for not following the tribe's wishes, and questioned Red Cloud's importance and influence. Additionally, he harangued what he termed "enterprising individuals more interested in gaining army contracts than achieving peace" for alarming the public.[48]

The campaign to convince the government that the peace initiative was bearing fruit appears to have been widespread within the Indian Bureau, with numerous letters and the Commissioner's Annual Report painting an optimistic picture. Indeed, in his State of the Union address on 5 December 1866, in his only mention of Indians, President Andrew Johnson stated that "Treaties have been concluded with the Indians, who, enticed into armed opposition to our Government at the outbreak of the rebellion, have unconditionally submitted to our authority and manifested an earnest desire for a renewal of friendly relations."[49]

It is clear that the president was referring only to members of the Five Civilized Tribes who had sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War. That the Indians on the northern plains failed to garner a mention is indicative of two things. First, the priority of the highest levels of government lay elsewhere. Second, the information instrument can be employed through the omission of information. After years of war, mention of conflict with hostile Indians was not politically expedient. Regardless, the Plains Indians situation continued to be seriously misunderstood and in the political context of reconstruction, the will to clearly understand it was lacking.

War for the Bozeman

After Red Cloud's departure from the treaty conference, his warriors, and those disaffected Cheyenne and Arapaho bands, attacked and harassed any white travelers and

soldiers using the Bozeman Trail. Their activities significantly decreased civilian use of the Bozeman Trail.[50] Carrington continued his mission and on 16 July, at the proposed location of his headquarters fort, he met with a group of Cheyenne chiefs who warned him that the Sioux were both powerful and angry. They claimed to want no part of the coming war, and even offered Cheyenne warriors as auxiliaries.[51] Carrington declined the offer and sent them on their way. Shortly afterwards a Sioux party intercepted the chiefs, beat them, and extracted information on the army's intentions. The next day the Sioux attacked one of Carrington's wagon trains, killing two men and stealing a herd of cattle. From that moment on, according to contemporary accounts, the soldiers on the Bozeman felt constantly under threat.[52]

Carrington remained in place and constructed Fort Philip Kearny within weeks. Additionally, he sent a detachment of two infantry companies ninety one miles north to construct Fort C. F. Smith. Both forts were completed by the end of August, but conditions had been trying. Indian attacks and raids had been ceaseless with reports of a death toll of between fifty and one hundred and fifty white men in the vicinity of the forts since their construction.[53] Along with Fort Reno, the Army now had three forts along the Bozeman. Only seven hundred soldiers manned these forts; a meager force designed to protect a corridor of around five hundred miles.

Upon requesting reinforcements, a Department of War official suggested to Carrington that Fort C.F. Smith be abandoned to allow for a redistribution of troops.[54] Having sanctioned the plan, even the War Department was unable to maintain its focus on the campaign. Carrington had been ordered to secure the Bozeman Trail and was then denied the means to do so.

The Indians continued to use guerrilla tactics and ambushes effectively against both civilian woodcutters and army escorts, but a decisive victory had thus far eluded them. On 21 December 1866 however, a decoy lured a mixed force of cavalry and infantry into a well-planned and executed ambush, killing all 81 personnel in what became known as the "Fetterman Massacre."

Both the Department of War and the Department of the Interior moved swiftly in response to the disaster. The army removed Carrington from command, blaming him for the defeat of Fetterman, and deployed reinforcements to Fort Phil Kearney. The Department of the Interior assembled a new fact-finding commission and dispatched it to Fort Laramie.[55] John Sanborn, a retired Brigadier-General, headed the commission. He and General Alfred Sully had convinced the Southern Cheyenne to cede their hunting grounds in Kansas in 1865, and the government hoped that they could achieve something similar in the north.

The Sanborn-Sully Commission did little to create peace. It failed to persuade Red Cloud, who the US now considered the overall leader of the Indian alliance in the Powder River area,[56] to attend any talks. This was not through want of trying; the commission's overtures were thwarted by both a lack of enthusiasm from the Indians, and attendance only by those who had already signed the treaty of the previous year. While not achieving its aim of peace talks with Red Cloud, the commission did highlight a "string of flagrant violations of treaty guarantees by whites, accompanied by an unwillingness of the federal government to meet its treaty obligations to the Indians."[57]

Despite highlighting the Indian Question at the national level, the Fetterman Massacre once again divided opinion. General Sherman, in a letter to General Grant,

infamously stated that, “We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women and children.”[58] It is unlikely that he genuinely believed in the total extermination of the Sioux. His comments were more than likely borne out of anger and frustration, and probably designed for public consumption as part of a low level information campaign.[59] Newspapers reported varying points of view. *The Evening Telegraph*, in Philadelphia, wrote that “we shall not believe it until further evidence is received,” but went on to identify the US Government’s Indian system as the cause of hostilities.[60] The reports continued for months. *The Montana Post*, on 16 March 1867 described Indian mutilations of soldiers in great detail. The newspaper claimed that the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and even the Crow had participated in the fight and called on the government to exact vengeance upon the Indians.[61] These reports incited public opinion and forced the government to respond.

The military once again sought to have the Indian Bureau transferred to the Department of War, but the publication of the Doolittle Report in late January 1867 thwarted their attempts. The report focused on civilizing the Indians through agriculture on the reservations, and claimed that the Department of the Interior was best placed to achieve that aim. Additionally, it deplored aggressive military action against the Indians. The report further polarized not only the Departments of War and the Interior, but the Legislative Branch. Congress opposed the recommendations and in effect aligned itself with the Department of War, while the Senate expressed a desire to see the military soften its approach.[62] The result of political deadlock was that the Indian Bureau remained a part of the Department of the Interior.

Hostilities near the Bozeman Trail had largely ceased for the remainder of the winter, although the forts expected surprise attacks. When the spring of 1867 arrived, Red Cloud's combined forces resumed their war. The army did little to alleviate the problems faced on the Bozeman. Instead, in an indication of where the priority for limited resources lay, it conducted a spring offensive further south, focusing on the security of the transcontinental railroad. This campaign achieved little by way of peace-making. Secretary of the Interior, Orville Browning, in a statement once again highlighting the tension between departments claimed that "The War Department seems bent on a general war and will probably force all the Indians into it."[63]

Returning to Washington, Sanborn insisted that a state of war still existed between the Indian alliance and the US. Furthermore, he blamed the state of affairs along the Bozeman Trail on the army for not supplying Carrington suitably during 1866.[64] The commission called on the government to seek peace with the Indians on "equitable terms,"[65] and recommended the formation of a federal tribunal to deal with the Indian problem. Additionally, and in line with already existing government policy, it called for a suitable reservation for the Sioux in particular.

Apart from the cost in the lives of US soldiers and civilians, the economic impact of the war on the northern plains proved immense. According to some members of Congress, it cost almost $1 million per Indian killed, with an additional cost of up to $2 million a week just to defend the frontier.[66] Whether these figures are accurate or not, the effect on opinion that their publication had was important. The government also considered the Indian threat to the railroads extending across the plains as an economic threat to the nation. In January of 1867, Thomas C. Durant, vice-president of the Union

Pacific Railroad, wrote to General Grant warning of a potential halt in the westward expansion of the railroad if more security assistance was not forthcoming.[67]

Congress created the Indian Peace Commission on 20 July 1867, partly because of the economic burdens outlined, and partly as a result of the Sanborn-Sully Commission's recommendations, This was a significant development in federal Indian policy, and although Red Cloud's alliance led to its creation, its mandate was far wider in scope, covering all Indians "east of the Rockies, not now peacefully residing on permanent reservations under treaty stipulations."[68]

The act, in what appears to be an effort to better coordinate and represent the military and diplomatic instruments of power, stipulated that the commission be comprised of three army officers of brigadier-general rank and above, and four civilians named as: the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nathaniel G. Taylor; Senator John B. Henderson, Chairman of the Committee of Indian Affairs; John Sanborn; and Samuel F. Tappan, a noted Indian supporter and the former chairman of the commission created to investigate the Sand Creek Massacre.[69] The president appointed Lt Gen Sherman, Maj Gen Alfred H. Terry, and retired Gen William S. Harney to represent the army. Soon after, the commission added Bvt Maj Gen Christopher Augur to the list of commissioners.

In an effort to induce Indians to follow a peaceful path, the act mixed diplomacy and economics by apportioning funding to the commission to "enable the Secretary of the Interior to subsist such friendly Indians as may have separated or may hereafter separate themselves from the hostile bands or tribes and seek the protection of the United States."[70] It empowered the commission to investigate the causes of Indian hostility and

make treaties that addressed, as far as was possible, the just complaints of the Indians, while at the same time maintaining the security of the railroad routes across the continent. While designed to achieve a peaceful resolution, the bill also included a provision authorizing the Secretary of War, in the event of a failure of the commission to bring about peace, to accept the services of up to four thousand mounted volunteers "necessary for the suppression of Indian hostilities."[71]

Federal Indian policy was evolving, but issues remained. First, the bill indicated that the maintenance of security of lines of communication remained a government priority. At the same time, and in line with a vocal public sentiment in the east that blamed the federal government for much of the suffering of the Plains Indians, it called for the commission to make treaties that acknowledged and remedied just complaints that the Indians had. Paradoxically, the fact that lines of communication ran through Indian Territory appears to have been a major Indian complaint.

Second, the bill called for a potential volunteer force of up to four thousand. This clause appears to support the extant view of senior military figures, such as General Grant, that the regular army's authorized strength was insufficient to meet the United States' security needs. But the act acknowledged that the solution to the Indian Question did not simply consist of military measures. The design and composition of the commission points to a desire to promote civilian primacy, while acknowledging that the military was still crucial to enforcing policy. Additionally, the provision of funding to subsist friendly Indians indicates a willingness on the part of the government to use economic incentives to dislocate reconcilable Indians from those remaining hostile to the United States.

The War Continues

Almost no civilian traffic used the Bozeman Trail during 1867, and Forts C.F. Smith and Phil Kearny remained under threat.[72] The Indians resolved to conduct further large-scale operations that summer. The first, on 1 August, was a largely Cheyenne assault against Fort C. F. Smith. Between five and eight hundred warriors descended on a hay-cutting party of twelve civilians and a twenty-man detachment of soldiers who, taking cover in a stockade built in the event of such an attack, held off the force for over six hours sustaining only three killed and two wounded. The second was a largely Sioux attack on a wood-cutting party outside of Fort Phil Kearny. Estimates of around one thousand warriors attacked the party and its army guard, but were again repelled by the defenders, this time from a corral which had been built to house mules. US casualties were six killed and two wounded. In both cases, the presence of the newly delivered Springfield-Allin rifles gave the defenders the firepower required to negate the numerical superiority of the Indians.

Reports of many hundreds of Indian casualties are both hard to substantiate, and difficult to believe. The Plains Indian way of war was centered round the minimum loss of Indian casualties. Indeed, some Indians at the time claimed that culturally they were usually unwilling, and unable, to sustain more than 1-2 percent losses[73] before both the leadership and individual warriors decided to halt attacks. While it is generally agreed that the Indians suffered greater than usual casualties in these actions, reports of thousands of Indian casualties appear wildly inflated.[74]

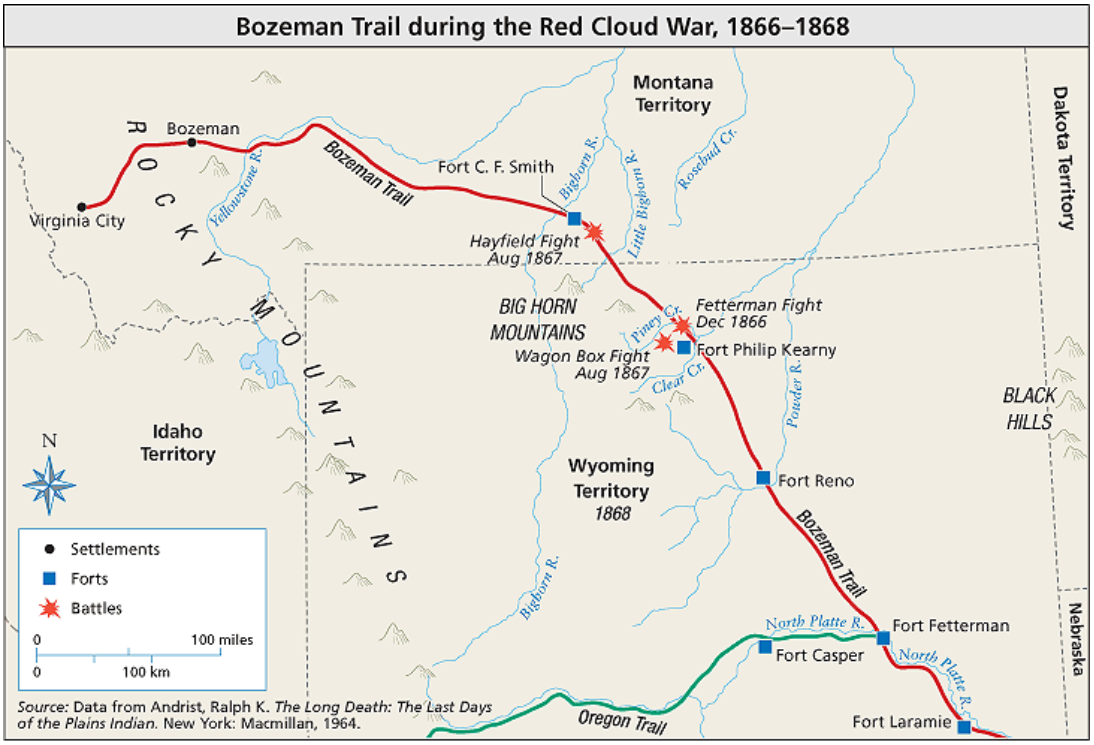

Figure 3. The Bozeman Trail, 1866-1868

Source: American Indian History Online, "Bozeman Trail during the Red Cloud War, 1866–1868," Facts On File, accessed 6 April 2016, http://www.fofweb.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE43&iPin=ANAIm005&SingleRecord=True.

This is a good example of how the army utilized the information instrument to its advantage. It presented both battles as resounding victories, with estimated Indian casualties inflated to match. This may have been in an effort to convince the nation, both public and political, of the army's success, or as a morale boost to troops actually engaged in combatting the Indians. It was likely a mixture of both.

For the Indians, the results of the both the Wagon Box Fight and the Hayfield Fight appear to have been less important. While they sustained casualties, they also killed whites and stole many of their horses and mules. Additionally, the army had failed to

restore security on the Bozeman as a result of the actions. The Indians, it seems, did not consider the results to have been defeats.[75]

Arguably, while both actions were tactical defeats for the Indians from a US perspective, taken together they were a strategic victory for Red Cloud's force. The perception was that Red Cloud had maintained a numerically strong and determined force comprised of different tribal groups for two fighting seasons, and had conducted massed coordinated attacks against military targets over ninety miles apart. Politicians and the public alike questioned the worth of expending vast sums of money and US lives, if the Indians could still deny the Bozeman Trail to most traffic and mount large coordinated attacks against well defended military installations.[76]

Additionally, Indian actions after the two events indicated a willingness and ability on their part to continue fighting. Indians continued conducting small attacks on parties attempting to travel the road, began harassing the newly built Fort Fetterman, and on 7 August they even attacked a Union Pacific freight train in Nebraska. This last incident alarmed residents, the army, and politicians alike in that it indicated a spread of hostilities rather than a containment. It also threatened the expansion of the transcontinental railroad, considered by many as the national priority in the west.[77] The 15 August *Omaha Herald* reported that the attack marked the "beginning of actual war,"[78] while *The Sun*, in New York, quoted Gen Augur as stating that he believed a general war was brewing and that he would require at least twenty thousand men in his command, and potentially as many from another command, in order to successfully prosecute it.[79]

The army still favored military action against Red Cloud and his followers; Sherman wrote to Grant asserting that war was inevitable and assuring him that "in another year we will be ready for them."[80] In contrast, the Department of the Interior was determined to reach a diplomatic solution. Politically, focus remained on the reconstruction of the South, while the nation's economic priority was the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a goal that outranked the maintenance of the road through the Powder River country.[81]

The penetration of the railroad, despite providing a target for Indian hostility, offered an alternative to the Bozeman Trail for the US. Figure 4 below illustrates how, by the spring of 1868, the Union Pacific Railroad had extended far enough across the continent that it had enabled opportunities for roads to the Montana gold fields to run west of the Powder River country. In addition, the Northern Pacific Railroad was scheduled to provide an eastern access to Montana which would itself offer an alternative to the Bozeman Trail.[82] The army therefore found itself in a situation where it was fighting Indians to protect a line of communication that was rapidly becoming obsolete. This state of affairs presented an opportunity for peace that would not compromise the priorities of the United States.[83]

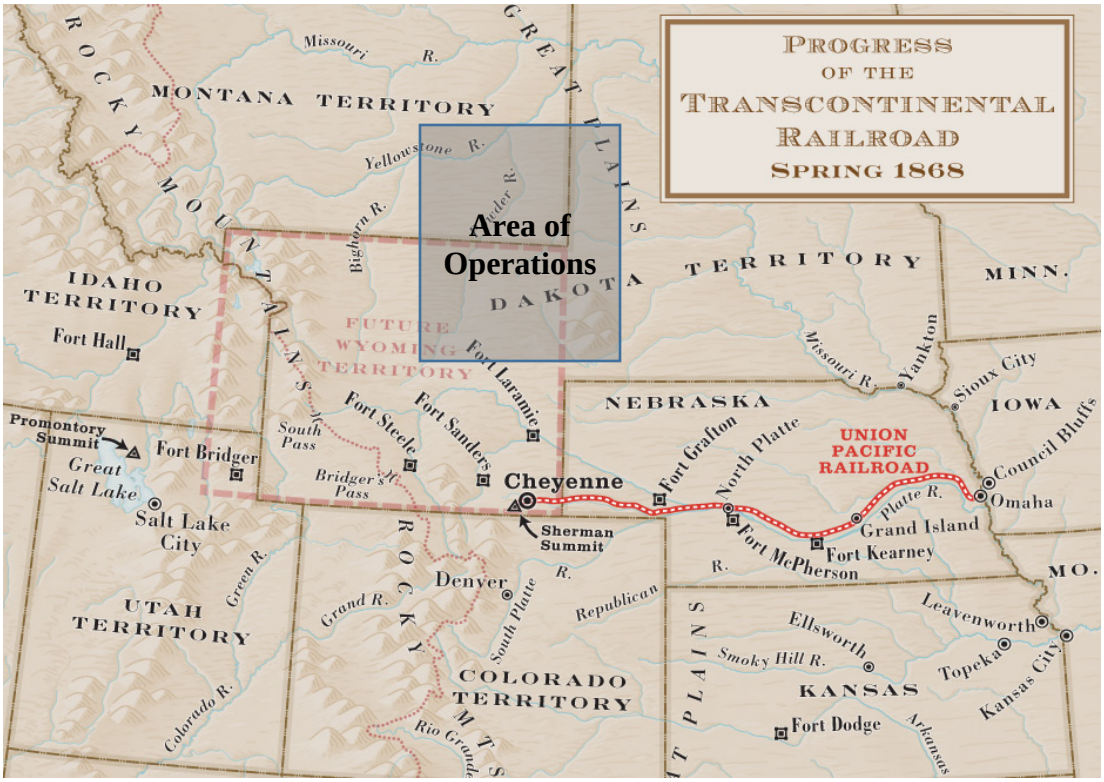

Figure 4. Progress of the Union Pacific Railroad, Spring 1868

Source: Modified by author, photo of Map by David Lindroth Inc., accessed 6 April 2016, http://www.amc.com/shows/hell-on-wheels/extras/hell-on-wheels-season-4-transcontinental-railroad-map.

The Peace Commission continued to seek a peaceful solution through talks and a treaty, with both the Powder River Indians and Indians on the southern plains who were also agitating. Treaty successes on the southern plains gave the commission reason to be confident. However, having arranged a peace conference at Fort Laramie in November, that confidence was dented when only a few friendly Crows attended. The commission, in reporting to Washington, stated that Red Cloud's messengers "assured us that whenever the military garrison at Fort Phil Kearny and Fort C.F. Smith were withdrawn, the war on his part would cease."[84] The commission sent a gift of tobacco, a symbol of

peace, to Red Cloud before they departed. He replied with a message thanking them and again reiterated that his war against the US would end when the soldiers met his demands.[85]

The commission reported a number of reasons for the failure of the hostile Indians to attend the conference, including a doubt of US motives, the onset of winter, and most startling, a belief that the US was "resolved on their extermination."[86] After the commission had departed, the Bureau of Indian Affairs left a special agent, H.M. Mathews, at Fort Laramie with the task of establishing contact with hostile leaders. He met with some of Red Cloud's Oglala and reported to the bureau that he had reached an agreement on the cessation of hostilities until the commission could return to discuss peace. In response, the army finally concluded that attempting to secure the near-obsolete Bozeman Trail through hostile territory was not worth the financial and military expense.

The troops available to the army were not sufficient to occupy the south and conduct an effective military campaign against the tribes on the plains. The costs associated with fighting the Indians remained a significant burden, with peace advocates often stating that it was cheaper subsisting the Indians than fighting them.[87] Because Red Cloud had become synonymous, in the minds of the public, with the war on the northern plains, the government needed his signature in order to give it credibility.

On 2 March 1868, Gen Grant wrote to Gen Sherman ordering the closure of Forts Reno, Kearny, and C.F. Smith. In his letter to Gen Sherman he wrote "I recommend this early movement in the abandonment of the posts referred to because by delay the Indians may commence hostilities and may make it impossible for us to give them up."[88] A week later, in a letter to the Secretary of War, Gen Grant informed him of his decision.

> The line of Military posts known as Forts Fetterman, Reno, Phil. Kearny and C. F. Smith, intended originally to cover an emigrant road to Montana, are found to pass through a country so desirable to the Indians for its game that no use can be made of the road thus covered except the traveler is protected by an escort sufficient to meet any band of Indians that may be on the War path. These posts are kept up at great expense and without any benefit. I propose to abandon them this Spring or Summer and have instructed Gen. Sherman accordingly. He suggests that as the buildings erected at them will not pay for removing them that they, or such of them as may be wanted, be disposed of to the Indian Bureau. I respectfully recommend that this suggestion be carried out.[89]

The timing of the two correspondences is significant. Gen Grant, in his capacity as Commanding General of the US Army, ordered the closure of the forts a full eight days prior to informing Edwin Stanton, the Secretary of War. In fact, Sherman forwarded the order on to Augur three days prior to Stanton being informed.[90] That the army had so much latitude is a symptom of the political turmoil that the Department of War, and the government in general, found itself in during 1868.

The Secretary of War was embroiled in President Johnson's impeachment, and was on the verge of resignation. General Grant was preparing to run for the Republican nomination for President, almost an assurance of victory if the reconstruction program was successful.[91] Thus, Grant's priority was reconstruction, and the expense and coverage of a failed military campaign against the Indians along the Bozeman Trail was unwelcome. In May 1868, Grant would go on to become acting-Secretary of War in the transition between Edwin Stanton and General John M. Schofield, one of Grant's own subordinates.[92] General Grant therefore wielded significant power as the Commanding General, more so than any of those that followed him, and felt himself to be in a position to make far-reaching decisions.

On receipt of the order to close the forts, Sherman forwarded the orders to Augur. "You may consider the thing as settled and proceed as soon as you please to draw off

your troops from that line and let the Montana people know that it is done."[93] He warned Augur of two things. First, a hasty withdrawal would indicate to the Indians that they had indeed won their war, an admission the military was loathe to make. Second, he cautioned against the immediate establishment of a new line of forts; Sherman was reluctant to fix his forces once again until it was "demonstrated to be of some practical use."[94]

The Peace Commission travelled to Fort Laramie to conclude peace. What followed was a humiliating conference where the only Indians in attendance were those that had had remained peaceful throughout the war. Red Cloud refused to attend and many newspapers, including the *New York Herald*, carried the story. "Red Cloud sends a message that he and his warriors in the mountains are waiting for the evacuation of the military posts, and when they are abandoned he will come to meet the Commissioners."[95]

Peace on the Powder River

The Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed on 29 April 1868, in the absence of Red Cloud. In it the United States Government accepted the Indians' demands: the closure of the Bozeman Trail and the abandonment of the forts protecting it. It awarded the Indians, in the view of the government, sizable tracts of land to live on, stipulating that the Indians agree to "relinquish all right to occupy permanently the territory outside their reservation as herein defined." Additionally, the Indians received the "right to hunt on any lands north of North Platte, and on the Republican Fork of the Smokey Hill River, so long as the buffalo may range thereon in such numbers as to justify the chase."[96]

The treaty contained within it a number of terms designed to continue the policy of civilizing the Indian through agriculture. It awarded arable land to each household, and

promised a supply of tools and livestock. It also focused on ensuring that the Indians agreed to cease all molestation of, and interference with, the railroads stretching across the continent.[97]

For the both the Department of War and the Department of the Interior, the absence of Red Cloud's signature remained problematic, but they determined to enforce its obligations as per the treaty in an effort to gain his agreement to peace. Abandoning the forts in the most cost-effective manner proved difficult. The army's efforts to sell some elements to the Indian Bureau failed. So too did the public sale as buyers were too fearful to travel to the forts for fear of Indian attacks. Finally the army, in an effort to rid itself of the forts, agreed to either haulage or abandonment.

The evacuation of the first fort, Fort C. F. Smith, occurred on 29 July 1868. The Indians torched it the following day. A few days later the army abandoned both Forts Reno and Phil Kearny. Jubilant Indians burnt the latter to the ground almost immediately.[98] Red Cloud kept the government and the army waiting, and there was a general fear that having given in to the demands of the Indians, a dangerous precedent may have been set which would only encourage war rather than avoid it.[99] On 7 November 1868, Red Cloud, acknowledging that the United States had met his demands, finally signed the treaty at Fort Laramie.

In an ironic turn of events, the intervening period between the abandonment of the Bozeman Trail and Red Cloud signing the treaty, which many construed as a defeat for the army, saw the Department of War gain primacy over the Interior Department with regards to Indian affairs on the northern plains. On 7 October 1868, the Indian Peace Commission met for the final time. In light of Red Cloud's apparent refusal to sign the

treaty, and because some of the peace agreements made with more southerly tribes were unravelling, General Sherman in particular was keen to influence proceedings.

The absence of Senator Henderson from the meeting gave the military and civilian members of the commission a balance of votes. General Terry was initially not going to attend due to a commitment to a Court of Inquiry but Sherman begged General Grant to postpone the Court of Inquiry by one week. In his telegraph he wrote that "Terry's presence may enable me to secure such action by the peace [sic] Commission such that will save us much Conflict and Confusion [sic] in the future."[100] Grant passed the request to the new Secretary of War, Jon M. Schofield, who granted the postponement, giving the military members of the commission a majority of votes. Sherman quickly took control of proceedings and pushed through a number of aggressive recommendations which the commission communicated in its final report.

First, it advised the continued subsistence of those Indians who moved to the reservations. Second, it advised that the government recognize and abide by already existing treaties, whether ratified or not. Third, Indian tribes should no longer be recognized as "domestic dependent nations" with whom treaties should be negotiated and agreed. While this exempted existing treaties, it was a significant departure from previous policy. Furthermore, the commission called on the government to treat all Indians as individuals, and in accordance with US laws. This was again a significant evolution of policy towards individual Indians, and essentially resulted in the United States applying US laws against people it did not, for the most part, consider citizens. Fourth, Indians who refused to move to reservations should be coerced to do so through the threat or use of military force. Fifth, the right of Indians to roam outside of agreed reservation

boundaries was to be curtailed for an undetermined period, linked to an end to depredations and hostility. Finally, the commission called for the transfer of the Indian Bureau from the Department of the Interior to the Department of War.[101] All of the recommendations came to pass bar the transfer of the Indian Bureau.

In addition to empowering the military at the strategic level with regards to the Indians, at the operational level Sherman created two separate military districts: one for the Sioux, and one for the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Comanche. The potential existed however for the military's new-found primacy to derail the much sought after peace with Red Cloud. The military had already become the *de facto* US authority on the northern plains. Congress directed that funds it had appropriated for the execution of treaty stipulations be distributed under Gen Sherman's direction.[102] Across the plains, military commanders assumed responsibilities, such as the distribution of food and the hearing of grievances, usually reserved for Indian agents, causing additional friction between the Departments of War and the Interior.[103]

In fact, the military's policies almost caused Red Cloud to refuse to sign the treaty. The commander of Fort Laramie, Bvt Brig Gen William Dye, was told to send Red Cloud to Fort Randall to deal with Gen Harney if the Sioux desired to trade and collect rations.[104] The army's new influence over Indian affairs manifested itself in later years, but the seeds of the army's operational approach were sown during this period.

Many within the Army's senior leadership advocated an approach similar to the comprehensive campaign against the south during the Civil War. The consensus was that attempting to engage and defeat mobile Indians was bound to lead to failure. Rather, an approach that targeted their bases of operations, property, and the people themselves was

key to defeating them.[105] In 1867 Sherman reported that "the only mode of restraining them is by making them feel that we can reach their families and property."[106] General Grant himself, prior to pursuing the "Peace Policy" that characterized his approach to the Indians in the early stages of his presidency, supported this view. In a letter in September 1868 he hoped Sherman would be able to "squelch the Indians this time effectually" and asked whether it would not be advisable to "push after their villages and families?" This, he stated, would "bring them to terms."[107] He was also quoted in newspapers. "We must clear the plains for the immigrants even if extermination of every Indian tribe is necessary."[108] Like Sherman following the Fetterman Massacre, Grant's statement was more than likely rhetoric, quoted as it was in an effort to reassure the public, and immigrants in particular.[109]

In a diary entry offering an insight into this new, more comprehensively aggressive approach, Lt Col Luther Bradley, ordered to scout an area in the central plains, wrote that his command was "to kill all the buffalo we find, and drive the Arappahoes [sic] and Cheyennes south, and the Sioux north."[110] Whether this was official direction or not, it characterized the way in which the army visualized peace on the plains – the ultimate defeat of the Indians through military harassment, if not subjugation, and economic dependence.

An Uneasy Peace

The United States Government ratified the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie on 16 February 1869. The treaty, while formally ending war between the Indians and the United States over control of the Bozeman Trail, did not stop isolated hostilities. General war

broke out on the southern plains that year, but the façade of peace in the north remained until the Sioux War of 1876.

Following the treaty, the United States subjected Red Cloud to an information campaign, much as it had done to Black Hawk in 1833 following his defeat by US forces,[111] taking him and others on a tour of Washington DC in 1870. National newspapers gave extensive coverage to the Sioux delegation. Topics ranged from what Red Cloud should wear when speaking to white audiences, to his requests for more rations and ammunition.[112]

It is difficult to ascertain what he thought as a result of the visit, but the assumption must be that it opened his eyes to the overwhelming power of the US. Furthermore, while he may have been somewhat self-congratulatory with regards to his recent victory, he must have been convinced of the futility of future armed resistance. He never entered into armed conflict against the US again. He did however remain a thorn in the side of US authorities, advocating for his people's rights with regards to everything from trading rights to the education of Sioux children, and possession of the Black Hills.[113]

Summary

The Civil War ensured the integrity of the Union, but it came at significant cost. Consequently, the period 1865 to 1868 was a transition period for the United States. This was characterized by military and political change, and a clear prioritization of national tasks.

At the strategic level, the army first reduced, and then completely eliminated its vast volunteer force. This left a small regular army that, in addition to policing the

frontier against Indian hostility, was committed to garrisoning, reconstruction of the south, and national defense tasks. With regards to the war on the northern plains, the army adopted an operational approach of establishing small forts to secure lines of communication. This resulted in a limited force that was fixed by the Indians and was therefore unable to conduct any kind of effective mobile defense. Despite a desire from some senior army leaders for a total-war operational approach against the Indians, the political and logistic support was not yet in place to allow it.

Politically, there remained significant turmoil. Reconstruction brought with it controversy, and led to a slow process to impeach the president. This process drew the attention of the Secretary of War away from problems on the plains, and ultimately caused his dismissal, reinstatement, and then his resignation. General Grant, in his capacity as Commanding General, became the acting Secretary of War, at the same time as being the front runner for the Republican nomination for president. This not only consolidated a significant amount of power in one individual, it made demands on his attention, which invariably meant that Red Cloud's War did not feature as significantly as it might otherwise have done.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The United States failed to effectively coordinate its instruments of power in the build up to, and during Red Cloud's War. This failure manifested itself in the dysfunctional relationship between the Department of War and the Department of the Interior with regards to Indian policy from 1851 until the end of 1868, but was especially apparent in the period immediately following the Civil War. Despite that failing, the United States was still able to achieve its strategic goal of access to Montana's gold fields and the west in general. Additionally, the Indians' operational success was instrumental in convincing the US Army of a requirement to return to a total-war operational approach in order to achieve its strategic end state of concentrating Indians on reservations.

Diplomacy and Politics

The government's overarching policy of concentration, which was essentially an evolution of its previous policy of separation, sought to achieve an end state where the conditions could be set for Indian integration into white American society. This policy envisioned the removal of Indians from traditional tribal territories to much reduced areas where they would be separate from whites, and at the same time exposed to the civilizing effects of Christianity and agriculture.[1] This would serve as a transition from their traditional nomadic way of life to one of settled agrarianism.

Both the Department of War and the Department of the Interior agreed on the end state, but differed in their approach.[2] Understandably, the Department of the Interior favored diplomacy, strongly underpinned by the economic and information instruments.

The Department of War believed that military action was key in setting the conditions for diplomacy on the United States' terms. It is reasonable to assume that due to the nature of their functions, the departments would approach the problem posed by the Indian Question in a different manner. While valid, that assumption risks ignoring some of the other factors that led to their rivalry, factors such as history, corruption, and departmental power plays.

The enmity that existed between the Department of War and the Department of the Interior stretched back to the transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to Department of the Interior control in 1849. When this occurred, the Department of War effectively lost the ability to control Indian policy. The department believed itself sidelined and forced to support and execute policy which it was no longer able to materially influence. Not only had the transfer curtailed the War Department's power, it had led, in the military's eyes, to a corrupt agency that was ultimately of detriment to the Indians.[3]

In contrast to some historians, John Bailey contends that the army was less concerned with a power grab and more concerned with an efficient system that would ultimately prove to be the most humane answer to the Indian Question.[4] The military consistently argued for a return of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Department of War. Their reasoning was twofold. First, the army would be a more efficient agent in administering the Indians. Second, the Department of War would bring departmental coherence to Indian policy by both formulating and enforcing it.[5]

The Department of the Interior opposed any transfer of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Department of War. It viewed the army with suspicion, often blaming it, such as in the case of the Sand Creek Massacre, for exacerbating the situation on the

plains rather than improving it.[6] It believed that the path to fulfilling the government's policy of concentration lay through diplomacy on the one hand, and economic incentives on the other. Reports from the Doolittle Commission, the Sanborn-Sully Commission, and the Indian Peace Commission all appeared to support this view. Their reports lamented the condition of the Indians, and variously recommended negotiated peace agreements on what Americans considered favorable terms for the Indians.

Information

The ultimate result of the informational instrument is influence and effect. Current US doctrine states that every "action that is planned or executed . . . communicates the intent of DOD, and by extension the USG, with the resulting potential for strategic effects."[7] While the above doctrine is from 2013, its relevance to the past is apparent. In supporting the security of the Bozeman Trail, the army dispatched the 18th Infantry Regiment to Fort Laramie during the 1866 treaty negotiations. The Sioux viewed it as a sign of the duplicity of the United States, believing them to be poised to invade land the Indians considered theirs, before negotiations had reached an agreement. This action, while designed to reassure, actually had the unintended consequence of contributing to the effective closure of the trail for the following two years as war erupted. This is a simple yet compelling example of how the possible effects of information were misunderstood, and how departments within the United States Government failed to coordinate activity in support of their overall message to the Indians.

On many levels however, the power of information was well understood. It was manipulated by numerous parties for a number of reasons, and in support of all of the other instruments. In 1854, politicians opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act used

information instrument to gain sympathy for the Indians, which helped their political cause of blocking slavery in new territories. Similarly, Governor Edmunds of Dakota Territory, in 1865, proudly communicated the peace his commission achieved through the signing of treaties with already friendly Indians. Rather than through a humanitarian desire, he did so in order to assuage the fears of potential immigrants and emigrants. Not only did his peace prove economically useful to the Dakota Territory, it went on to "prove" the viability of a peaceful, diplomatic solution.

Information, as it is now, was key in driving public and political opinion, which in turn influenced policy. The differences in opinion between citizens in the east, most removed from the effects of Indian warfare, and those in closer proximity to the frontier were often marked. Newspapers stoked public opinion, but like today, the stories they ran were often written with their readerships in mind. Thus, opinions and beliefs were perpetuated in line with existing biases. Newspapers also often represented the political convictions of their owners or financial backers, becoming at times mouthpieces for powerful and influential personalities. The US Army also made use of the information instrument to influence public opinion. After the Wagon Box and Hayfield fights in August, 1867, the army released reports of inflated Indian casualty figures as a way of demonstrating effectiveness. While political figures may have seen the reports for what they were, the details were carried in newspapers.

Despite unintentional messaging of the Indians at times, there were definite occasions when information was used to influence the Indians directly. After the treaty, Red Cloud and other leaders were taken on a tour of Washington D.C. The tour was designed to impress the Indians by showing them the might of the United States, and

thereby dissuade them from entering into conflict again. While Red Cloud never went on record to state whether the tour had any influence on him, his subsequent refusal to enter into conflict with the United States indicates that it may well have had an impact.

Throughout the conflict, the Indians did not differentiate between the Department of War, the Department of State, the Bureau of Indian affairs, the Senate, or Congress. Despite the Indians' own individualistic culture, where the actions of an individual might not be representative of his band or tribe, each action on the plains conducted by a white person was often perceived as an action conducted on behalf of the United States. This meant that any misalignment of activities, and the messaging that was inherent within those activities, was believed to be the will of the US.

Military

Despite troop numbers on the plains being significantly higher at the end of the Civil War than before, many of the troops were volunteers that soon disappeared as a result of the Department of War's demobilization program. The *de facto* occupation of former Confederate states by large numbers of regular soldiers during Reconstruction, along with other tasks, further strained the availability of troops. Without sufficient manpower, the army's wide area security task on the plains suffered. It was forced to construct a series of forts designed primarily to protect lines of communication, but the task of securing these outposts left very few soldiers to actually secure the trails or act as a strike force against a highly mobile enemy. When the army did resolve to conduct large-scale offensives against the Indians, such as the 1865 Connor Campaign, it failed to achieve tangible results due to logistic shortcomings and a lack of political appetite for bloody, but potentially decisive, action.

The experience of the Civil War influence the army's desired approach to war against the Indians. Senior military leaders, having witnessed the success of the Union's operations against the Confederate home base during actions such as Sherman's March to the Sea, were convinced of a total-war strategy that would targeted the Indians' villages, especially during winter, thereby depriving them of both an economic base and a safe haven for rejuvenation. In Red Cloud's War, however, they were frustrated in this regard by both logistic constraints as well as political considerations.

Economic

The genesis of Red Cloud's War, and the overall Plains Indian Wars, was partially born out of economic interests. The US desire for resources, in conjunction with the concept of Manifest Destiny, drove thousands to travel west, opening up trails and railroads through land that had previously been the preserve of the Indians. The Bozeman Trail, blazed through several Indian nations' territories in order to shorten the route to the Montana goldfields, was the primary catalyst for hostilities in the Powder River country. Additionally, the transcontinental railroad, an economic priority in the west following the end of the Civil War, shaped the proposed locations of the reservations into broadly northern and southern sectors, allowing for a central corridor for the railroad.

The constant stream of migrants, along with the advance of the railroad, had economic consequences for the Indians too. As herds of bison were divided and decimated, the very economic base the Indians relied on was degraded. This had a number of consequences. First, it forced many bands to rely on US Government handouts for survival. While running counter to the government's economic spirit, it did create a sometime useful dependency on the part of some of the Indians, such as the Santee and

the Brulé Sioux, which gave the US leverage when conducting diplomacy. Second, it fostered competition between tribes for ever-dwindling resources, thereby intensifying already existing tribal enmities. While once again not in line with the governments' aim of fostering inter-tribal peace,[8] the economic tensions that existed between tribes was leveraged in the US' struggle against Red Cloud's alliance through the use of Indian scouts and auxiliaries. Third, it angered many Indians as their way of life altered, driving many to align with militant leaders such as Red Cloud.

Ironically, economics also played a significant role in ending the conflict on the Bozeman Trail. Apart from the obvious cost in US lives, the war proved extremely expensive financially, causing many within government to question the utility of fighting the Indians. In an apparent answer to that question, the progress of the railroads convinced the army that acquiescence to Indian demands in Red Cloud's War presented an "opportunity rather than a liability."[9] This also allowed stretched resources to be focused on what was clearly the priority, that is the protection of the railroads.[10]

Red Cloud's War: A Watershed Campaign

Despite the economic priority of access to the west, Red Cloud's War was never a national strategic priority for the United States Government, and it therefore never received the attention required to expedite it. President Andrew Johnson's Annual Messages to the Senate and Congress, from December 1865 to December 1868, focused heavily on the political and economic aftermath of the Civil War, but made scant reference to Indian affairs. Where mention was made, the president reiterated the ongoing requirement for the concentration of Indians away from white lines of communication and settlements.[11]

At the campaign's conclusion, it was apparent that the US had not achieved the operational end state identified, that is the security of the Bozeman Trail. It did however achieve its strategic end state of access to Montana and beyond. That this occurred as a result of the progress of the railroad, which in turn allowed routes to bypass the Powder River country, rather than through defeat of the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho alliance is, in strategic terms, immaterial.

The campaign highlighted a number of issues facing not just the US Army, but the entire federal approach to the problem posed by the Indians. The failure of the US to coordinate its instruments of national power was at times stark. The military viewed itself as the primary instrument for use in producing an acceptable diplomatic solution, whereas the civilian politicians and administrators saw diplomacy as the instrument itself, supported by the military, and to a degree economics.

Even the Indian Peace Commission, designed to better coordinate diplomatic and military efforts, was split by departmental bias and rivalry. It is ironic, or perhaps an indication of the reality of attitudes towards the Indians, that a peace commission, in its final act, recommended the use of force as a way of persuading Indians to accept a new order. Martial domination of the Peace Commission in its final days occurred as a result of a conscious act at the highest levels of the Department of War to weight the voting of the commission in its favor, thus handing effective power regarding Indian Policy back to the army.

Inter-departmental rivalry continued to adversely affect the ability of the United States to coordinate its instruments of power with regards to American Indians, and a policy that favored either diplomacy or the military was still some way off. The

Departments of War, and the Interior would continue to struggle for control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs until Indians ceased to be a threat to US interests, and accusations of corruption and incompetence within the bureau remained. Red Cloud's War did, however, serve as a watershed campaign for the United States. As a result of it, and trouble on the southern plains, the military forced recommendations that effectively ended the treaty-making process and encouraged the government from that point on to deal with Indians as individuals rather than members of dependent nations. The diplomatic path, while not completely discredited, suffered as a result of the perceived lack of peace on the plains, despite hard-fought treaties being in place.

The campaign also highlighted how ineffective the army's approach had been, and the lessons it learnt influenced the formulation of a Total-War strategy that would, in future campaigns, target the Indians' villages and economic bases in all seasons, a strategy that would ultimately result in defeat for all Indians who resisted US control.

It is apparent that the United States met with failure against Red Cloud because it failed to effectively coordinate its instruments of national power. This has been demonstrated through numerous examples of the inability of the executive departments to synchronize their activities. For the Indians, the result was an overall approach that fluctuated between peace and force, with economic incentives designed to both create dependencies and foster independence. The Indians were often bewildered by the actions of the United States, and often completely misunderstood what they committed to when signing treaties. This inability to synchronize activities did not always arise through governmental ineptitude. Rather it was often a result of a number of factors, including prioritization, political focus, and inter-department rivalry.

The most significant factor affecting the ability of the government to adopt a comprehensive approach to the issue of Indian hostility in the Powder River country was that of prioritization. The end of the Civil War brought with it the program of reconstruction. This program was the national political priority and required significant time, effort, and resources from both the Department of War and the Department of the Interior. The nation's economic priority swiftly became the progress of the transcontinental railroad, with executives of railroad companies able to write directly to the Commanding General of the United States Army to complain of a lack of security. Limited resources were therefore directed at these national priorities over Red Cloud's War.

The ability of senior government figures to provide more oversight and direction was limited due to political focus. The turmoil surrounding Johnson's presidency, in the lead up to, and during his impeachment, distracted from matters that were not national priorities. As well as the impeachment controversy, rivalry within the Legislative branch saw the Senate and Congress often pitted against each other over many issues, including Indian affairs.

Inter-departmental rivalry between the War Department and the Interior Department was significant. This rivalry stemmed from the inception of the Department of the Interior, and the power it gained at the expense of the War Department. The relationship was damaged over time by the attitudes of the army towards the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and vice versa. The army held the bureau in low esteem, accusing it of corruption, while the bureau mistrusted the army and charged it with worsening relations with the Indians.

From the US's perspective, the results of its inability and unwillingness to coordinate its instruments of national power were both positive and negative. In the short term, it failed in its operational objective, and was forced to conduct a long , unplanned operational pause in its conflict with the Indians of the northern plains. In the medium term, failure appeared to give the army a scapegoat in the Department of the Interior, and its insistence on diplomacy. It was able to gain ascendancy with regards to Indian affairs, and conduct warfare against hostile Indians as it saw fit. In the long term it set the stage for the culmination of the Plains Indian Wars, the Sioux War of 1876.

Epilogue

Mark Twain has often been attributed with the quote "History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme." While our systems of government are slightly different now, and structures exist to increase coordination between government departments, there are lessons to be learned from Red Cloud's War. The campaign stands as an example of how a nation whose military and economic resources far outweigh that of its enemy can still meet defeat when it is unwilling, or unable, to coordinate its instruments of national power. It also calls into question the desire to wage a conflict when resources are focused on other priorities, and when political focus lies elsewhere. It does however indicate that factors such as prioritization, political focus, and inter-department rivalry are perhaps systemic, rather than unique characteristics of the time period analyzed.

The campaign highlights how the concept of victory should be linked to strategic end states rather than operational objectives. From the United States' point of view, Red Cloud's War was a limited war fought for limited objectives. It was designed to achieve a strategic goal, that of easier access to the west, through the attainment of operational

objectives, that is the security of the Bozeman Trail. While operationally a failure, the strategic goal was achieved through means other than war. The transcontinental railroad, despite not being complete in 1868, offered the US easier access to the west by avoiding the Powder River country. This allowed the United States to achieve its strategic goal, while at the same time allowing the Sioux, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho alliance to achieve its operational objective.

This calls into question whether the United States ever needed to enter into armed conflict over the Bozeman Trail in the first place. It is true that nations blunder into wars unexpectedly, but tactical patience on the part of the US would have allowed the railroad to advance as it did, and would have freed military resources to be better used elsewhere. It is of course easy to ponder "what ifs" with the benefit of hindsight. While the Bozeman Trail was the catalyst for Red Cloud's War, there was an inevitability of conflict. The Indians had two choices: resistance or accommodation. History shows us that conflict with the United States was the only outcome as long as the Indians defied its policy towards them.

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[1] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1849-1850,* 9-10, accessed 28 March 2016, http://digital.library.wiscedu/1711.dl/ History.AnnRep4650.

[2] Philip Weeks, *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820-1890, The American History Series* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1990), 114.

[3] John W. Bailey, *Pacifying the Plains: General Alfred Terry and the Decline of the Sioux, 1866-1890* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979), 66.

[4] Ibid., 67.

[5] Ibid., 65-67.

[6] Weeks, *Farewell My Nation*, 114.

[7] Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, I-12.

[8] Francis P. Prucha, ed., *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 85.

[9] Robert W. Larson, *Red Cloud: Warrior Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 118.

[10] Bruce Vandervort, *Indian Wars of Canada, Mexico and the United States, 1812-1900* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 175.

[11] James Daniel Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*.vol 6 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), 353-371, 445-459, 558-581, 672-691.

CHAPTER 5

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

There exists no shortage of books, periodicals, and articles covering the United States' campaigns on the northern plains, and specifically those against Red Cloud in the war for the Bozeman Trail. Almost all individuals familiar with the "Old West" have heard of tribes such as the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Pawnee and the Crow. Most have a rudimentary knowledge of battles like the "Fetterman Massacre" and the "Wagon Box Fight." Leaders such as Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse are famous, as are Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. The reason they are familiar is because they featured prominently within the military aspect of the northern plains. What is less well understood are the diplomatic efforts to pacify the plains, the different approaches adopted by the civilian and military leadership; and the economics influencing Indian policy. By synthesizing these aspects, we can gain an understanding of why policy was executed as it was.

This thesis has sought to tie together the Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic instruments of national power to analyze the United States Government's approach to the problem posed by Indian resistance along the Bozeman Trail. A wealth of information exists, but much of it is specifically focused on individual instruments, with few addressing the significance of information. Through broad research, an appreciation has been gained for the subtle ways in which information was used to influence both the Indians and the US domestic audience. So too how economics was used to both influence and undermine the Indians.

It is worth noting that many historical works covering American Indians fall into two broad camps. The first, often written prior to 1960, tends to regard the Indians as a barrier to the spread of civilization across the American continent. It often refers to them as savage and barbaric, and is dismissive of their political aims. A number of these books are a product of their time and have become somewhat dated. They should not be dismissed, but the context in which they were written needs to be understood.

The second, perhaps as damaging to the pursuit of historical truth as the first, mythologizes the Indians to a degree. Many of these works, while containing excellent information, are biased in their origin and in their description of events. Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, while a classic, fits somewhat into this category. Again, context is everything. A number of these books were written during and just after the civil rights movement. Events such as the political occupations of Alcatraz in 1969 and Wounded Knee in 1973, and other activities of groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), highlighted Native American anger and drove a number of historians to re-examine history in an effort to understand that anger. One significant exception to this timeframe is Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor*. Originally written in 1881, it covers a range of tribal groups and highlights the United States' failings towards them. Jackson, an Indian Reformer, decried the fact that reports by various Indian Commissions within Annual Reports, lay unread in governmental archives. Her objective was to raise awareness of the plight of Indians, while ultimately still seeking to Christianize them.

As with all research, the broader the base the better the overall knowledge. A simple example that highlights the importance of a wide variety of sources is that of

Christopher C. Augur, a member of the Indian Peace Commission and a commander on the plains. Three separate accounts covering the same period describe him as a Colonel, a Brigadier-General, and a Brevet Major General.[1] This is not to discredit the research of others, it only proves that if researchers disagree on a detail as simple as that of an army rank, interpretations of events are bound to differ as well. Reaching a clear understanding of the context, conduct, and outcomes of the war was only possible through extensive reading and cross-referencing.

General Background

There are countless books and articles available which outline the course of the war over the Bozeman Trail. As already indicated, a classic in terms of overall US-Indian relations is Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. A fascinating narrative, albeit designed to highlight the unjust way in which American Indians were dealt with by the United States, that tells the story of Indian contact with Europeans and the United States. It outlines, among other things, Red Cloud's War and the events that surrounded it. It is well written and as the bibliography testifies, has solid research underpinning the sometimes melancholic lamentations of Indian loss.

More recently, Bob Drury and Tom Clavin's biography of Red Cloud, *Red Cloud: The Greatest Warrior Chief of the American West*, is another rich narrative that weaves together history and storytelling to present a compelling, yet less emotive view of both Red Cloud and the war named for him. Unfortunately, it only tells the story in detail up to the point that Red Cloud's forces defeated Captain William Fetterman on 21 December 1866. It then brushes over the remaining two years of the conflict, and pays lip service to Red Cloud's leadership and advocacy following the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.

Robert M. Utley's *The Indian Frontier: 1846-1890* proved an excellent source of broad background that highlighted key issues and events. Utley's writing is easy to read and leaves no doubt that he is an expert in his field. This particular work covers the trans-Mississippi west in the second half of the 19th century, and offers some interesting theories on the real issues underpinning Indian hostility towards the US, one of which is the notion that hatred of the reservation system rather than the white men drove many of the conflicts from the Indians' perspective.

In *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem*, James C. Olson provides a focus on the Sioux. He tries to interpret their transition from adversaries of the state to wards of the state. Olson valuably provides a number of quotes and citations that give insight into the government's military and diplomatic policy towards the Sioux.

Diplomatic and Political

To gain an understanding of the diplomatic approach of the US Government, it has been vital to study the treaties signed both in the build up to, and resulting from the conflict. Similarly, understanding the context within which treaty negotiations occurred has been important. It has allowed a broader understanding of the implications of these treaties, and has given some indication as to where the so called "Indian Question" ranked in terms of strategic priorities within the national politics of the United States immediately following the Civil War.

Francis Paul Prucha's *Documents of United States Indian Policy* was a useful starting point. The book is not a comprehensive collection. It is, by the author's admission, a selection of unedited documents and extracts of documents designed to highlight the path that the United States Government took with regard to the conduct of

Indian affairs. Prucha omitted some important documents, and edited certain documents for reasons of space. The book serves as an excellent introduction to official documentation and points the researcher in the direction of further study.

Messages and Papers of the Presidents:1789-1897 compiled by James D. Richardson, was useful in reviewing President Andrew Johnson's Annual Messages to the Senate and Congress. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* was another valuable source. In it, notes and references link disparate correspondences that together give a clearer indication of context.

A number of primary documents have been researched on the internet. These have ranged from the 1851 and 1868 Treaties of Fort Laramie, to Annual Reports by the secretaries of the Executive Departments and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. A wide variety of primary source documents are now freely available online and make the job of the researcher easier in many respects as access is not an issue. Difficulties can arise when searching through large volumes of original text, especially on sites that do not offer a comprehensive search function within individual documents. The American Memory Project, accessed via the Library of Congress website, has been invaluable for the ease of access to Annual Reports and treaties it has allowed. So too the digital library at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The latter also provides access to various individual accounts of the time. Online sources have allowed research to take place using documents which were once confined to libraries and special collections, and this can only be a positive step in increasing access.

The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865–1903, by Robert Wooster, proved valuable in that it effectively, if briefly, links policy with military action and

therefore covers both the diplomatic and military instruments in a succinct manner. It weaves military campaigns into the context of the political machinations of the times, often pointing to the confusing role of the military in the formulation of Indian policy. Wooster discusses how at various points the relationship between the Department of War and the Department of the Interior degraded over the question of control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[2] It usefully explains the limitations of the US military, in the context of what was essentially a dual chain of command, in conducting military action against those Indians considered hostile. Wooster's extensive bibliography is also very useful as a signpost towards further study.

Another source that provides a broad outline of interactions between American Indians and the US, was Philip Weeks' *Farewell, My Nation: The American Indian and the United States, 1820-1890*. Weeks covers seventy years of US interaction with Indians in just over 230 pages. Such an extensive subject, covered in a relatively small amount of pages, is a good indication that depth was not his aim. It is an easily digestible broad history, and does an excellent job of setting the context and highlighting some major diplomatic, political, and military milestones and events. A superb bibliographical essay, which contains a wealth of both primary and secondary sources, follows his prose and rounds out an excellent work.

Information

Understanding public, military, and departmental attitudes and opinions towards American Indians at the time, and comparing those opinions to political discourse has at times identified clear links between opinion, policy, and action. Many of the books that cover other areas of power have touched on the information domain, citing the attitudes

of military commanders, local officials, and traders. Additionally, articles and editorials from newspapers of the time have been invaluable in providing an insight into the opinions and attitudes of local white populations.

Access to historical newspapers has been through a variety of methods, with websites such as Chronicling America, a project accessed through the Library of Congress website, being of particular value. This website offers an extensive collection of digitized newspapers from all over the United States over the period 1836-1922. This offers the researcher a huge array of research material, but should be approached with caution. When using the search function, dates linked with specific events are critical if the researcher is on a tight timeline. There is a risk that the researcher will spend an inordinate amount of time searching through articles, adverts, and editorials before finding something of even passing value. That is not to detract from the source–it is an excellent tool, but must be used appropriately to be of real value.

Military

As mentioned previously, the best known aspects of how the west was won are the battles that were fought across the continent. Despite being relatively familiar, military actions and options have been re-analyzed within their strategic context. This has shed light on whether military force was used as part of an integrated governmental approach, as a unilateral activity on the part of the Department of War, or as the only available response.

Many of the books researched cover military activity against the Indians in some detail. Other books offering more than a simple outline of military events include two works by Robert Utley. *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian,*

1848-1865 offers information and insight into military activity by both regular and volunteer troops up until just after the end of the Civil War. It gives detailed accounts of the army's garrison life and both peaceful and violent interaction with the Indians. *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian: 1866-1891* picks up where *Frontiersmen in Blue* finished, and achieves a similar aim. Both are useful sources of information. The former provides excellent context leading to the Red Cloud campaign, while the latter provides insights into the campaign itself, and addresses some of the politics both driving and hindering it.

Fort Laramie: Military Bastion of the High Plains, by Douglas C. McChristian builds on other works such as Remi A. Nadeau's *Fort Laramie and the Sioux Indians,* to describe the operational role of Fort Laramie over its lifespan. It references a number of resources, such as official letters and reports, which have proved valuable primary sources.

Economic

As is the case today, economics was a driving factor in national strategy in postbellum United States. The land occupied by Indians represented economic opportunity for individuals, which placed political pressure on the government. It also represented resources and wealth for an expanding nation that was feeling the detrimental economic effects of a brutal civil war.

Despite its significance, very little literature exists that explicitly deals with the government's economic dealings with the Indians. Rather, information has had to be gleaned from works covering other areas. That is not to say that the information does not exist, the researcher must simply work harder to find it.

There is plenty of evidence within many of the sources researched that point to economic interests, and how they impacted and influenced the war against the Indians. For instance, Utley's *The Indian Frontier*, and Weeks' *Farewell, My Nation*, both point to the requirement for the United States to expand west during and after the Civil War. Access to the gold fields of Montana was the driving factor in the establishment of the Bozeman Trail, and access to the wealth the gold fields generated was important for the national economy. Additionally, a number of books and treaty documents reviewed indicate the importance of the transcontinental railroad in terms of national strategic priorities.

Consideration of the use of economics to create an Indian dependency on the government, whether intentionally or not, was interesting and provided another perspective on the economic domain. Additionally, it is important to analyze the deliberate and coincidental degradation of the Indians' economic base. Information pertaining to these two subsets of economics was found in a number of the books and treaties already reviewed above.

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[1] Robert W Larson, *Red Cloud: Warrior Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 108; Douglas C. McChristian. *Fort Laramie: Military Bastion of the High Plains* (Norman: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008), 289; Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 106.

[2] Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865–1903* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 4, 11, 80-83.

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